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WAVES

# Welcome

PHOTOGRAPH OLIVER GORDON



HAVING A VISION to improve your home is always a good thing, believes designer and TV presenter Kevin McCloud. In his exclusive interview with us (see p26) he shares his forward-thinking views on how we need to build bigger, better and more sustainable homes – and he

offers encouragement to anyone who wants to carry out home improvements to their existing property.

If you're thinking of taking on a project, be it decorating, gardening or a complete room revamp, we can help – this July issue is packed with inspiration and practical advice to get you started.

See how to mix the season's vivid green hues with warm wood tones to create a sophisticated scheme for a living room, dining area or bedroom (p18). Or, if you prefer pared-back simplicity, take a look at Emily and Andrew Curthoys' stunning Victorian terrace in Aberdeen, where all traces of a 1970s update have been removed to leave a light, white and surprisingly spacious home with an open-plan kitchen and dining area. Now the original period pieces, including a balustrade staircase and striking fireplace, shine through. In this instance the planners did the couple a favour when they turned down part of the application. 'We weren't allowed to remove the wall between the living and dining rooms and we're so pleased we kept the separate spaces,' says Emily. See p58.

We've stepped outside in many of this month's pages to find inspiring designs for garden rooms and sheds (p30), plus fabulous outdoor dining ideas (p70). We've also chosen a cute and colourful picnic set (p88), sustainable picnic accessories and low-energy outdoor lighting (p146) just for you. Completing our celebration of summer is a delightful outdoor work space (p150), outdoor room (p156) and fabulous cottage garden that has been a labour of love for three generations of one family (p162), as well as garden art (p160), best barbecues (p166) and delicious seasonal recipes (p168). Enjoy the alfresco life!

  
Julia Goodwin, Editor  
Follow me on twitter  
@JuliaHouseBED



## Favourite buys for July

Bring **SOPHISTICATED GREYS** alive with **ZESTY ORANGE** and **GREEN**



**1** Pure **kitchen** in Blanched Almond from John Lewis of Hungerford. Prices start at £17,500 **2** Hay strap **mirror**, £140, Edited **3** Palm Leaves **cushion**, £8, Tesco **4** Light up the garden with solar **topiary**

**stakes** (H36cm), £18 for four, Next **5** The Pilot chair in Pause fabric is designed by Barber & Osgerby and curves to fit the body's shape, £1,908 at Knoll **6** Tropical **throw**, from £45, Secret Linen Store

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE **WHERE TO BUY** PAGE

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Styling **Hannah Deacon**  
Find out how to get our  
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\*Our cover stories are  
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# Don't miss



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YOUR  
OWN



## HOUSE BEAUTIFUL HOMES

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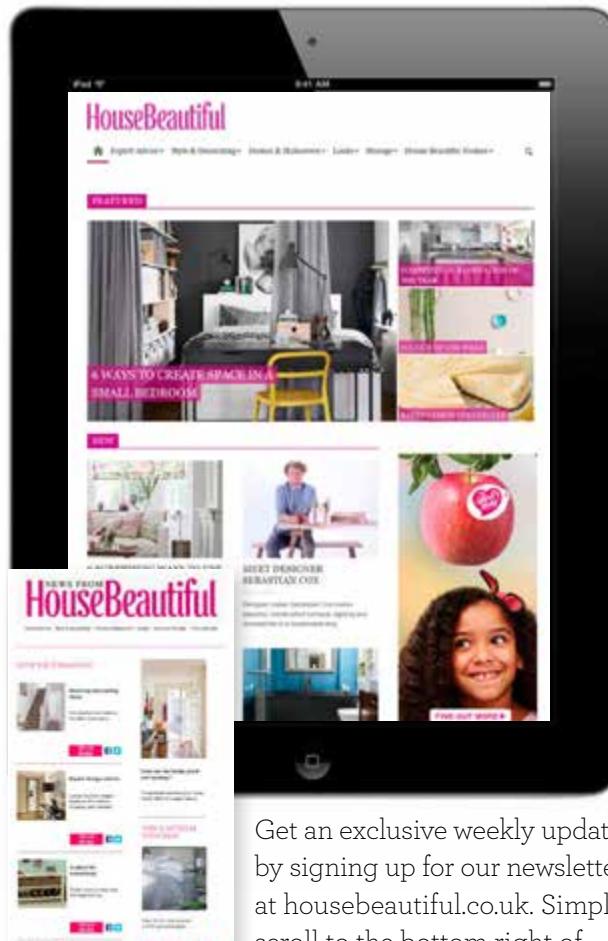
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# Have your say

We love to hear your news and views on Facebook or Twitter, or by email or letter

**STAR LETTER**



## TIMELY TRADITION

When summer comes I always enjoy packing for my annual holiday, leaving space in my luggage to bring back mementos I buy along the way when exploring new places. I love finding little trinkets and save them for winter to hang on my Christmas tree. Then I can relive fond memories of summers gone by and it makes for a really unique tree!

*Jane Waite, via email*

## COMMUNITY SPIRIT

All the neighbours in our quiet Staffordshire cul-de-sac know each other well. The other day I bought a copy of House Beautiful, as I was about to redecorate, when I ran into a neighbour and showed her the magazine. She loved it and asked for all my old issues (I have several!), and now they're inspiring the whole street.

*Lincoln Hendricks, via email*

## SHOWER HAPPY

*Bathroom Notebook* (May, 2015) was nicely timed. You gave me some great ideas to refresh my bathroom and your practical advice was so helpful, especially when it came to choosing the shower jets. My bathroom may be the smallest room in the house, but I can see now that it's one of the easiest to update.

*Kay Maddocks, Cheshunt, Herts*



*From our Facebook page... Lovely space says Trisha Kavanagh-Porta on our post about making small gardens look bigger.*



*From our Twitter feed... Thanks for the nice profile from @HB, I was very honoured to be featured! @SnowdenFlood*



*From Julia... Congratulations to Writtle Horticultural College young gardeners for a stunning garden that took best in show at @ideal\_home\_show. @JuliaHouseBED*

## HOME LIBRARY

In the 10 years I've been subscribing to House Beautiful I've cut out and filed literally hundreds of amazing ideas, articles and recipes from the magazine. I now have an impressive library of fantastic designs for different areas of the house and garden, and lots of favourite recipes. They're great for browsing through and brilliant when I need a bit of inspiration.

*Carol Townsend, via email*

*Thanks Carol - see our bathroom special on page 99 - it's perfect for pulling out and keeping*



## WONDERFUL WORKSPACE

Your article *Desktop Darlings* in the May 2015 issue was so useful. My desk is my domain but I'd love it to be more stylish. I've shown the pages to my boss and he's going to kindly chip in for the gorgeous lamp and the great looking clock. I can't believe my luck and can't wait to have a workspace that will look as though I enjoy working at it!

*Vanessa Smith, Llanarmon-yn-Ial, Denbighshire*

## SAY A SPECIAL THANK YOU

I'd like to thank the John Lewis flooring team in Peterborough. I was having flooring installed but when the workmen took up the old flooring, they realised my washing machine had been quietly leaking for years and the floor was soaked! They had to take it all up and replace it before they could fit the hardboard and new flooring. I'm sure anyone else would have made a hasty exit!

*Susie Pollard, via email*

*If you'd like to thank someone for help or brilliant customer service, email or write to Say a Special Thank You at the address below. If your letter is printed, we'll send them a bouquet from Bunches (0800 626 249; bunches.co.uk).*



## WIN THIS

Our star letter writer wins £100 to spend on Craig & Rose paint. Other printed letters win £50 to spend on Craig & Rose paint (01883 740011; craigandrose.com).

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£100**



# WHAT'S HOT



## PAPAYA PUNCH

Summer is the perfect time to give your home a lift and this delicious colour will do the job



**1** Brighten your bedside table with the Cody **lamp**, £95, Dickens & Jones collection, House of Fraser **2** All eyes will be on the handwoven 100 per cent wool Gandia Blasco Sioux **rug**, from £385, Heal's **3** Get comfortable on this fabulous folding **deckchair**, £30, Tesco Direct **4** Turn your table into a work of art with a few pretty and practical pressed vinyl Dahlia **placemats**, £12.95 each, Amara **5** The Aggie **vase**, £20, Habitat, is made with a reactive glaze, so each one is unique **6** Truly tropical, the Coconut Palm Pickers **cushion cover**, £40, Safomasi, has a simple palm print on one side and big palm trees on the other **7** Created by award-winning designer Konstantin Grcic, the Tom and Jerry **stool** is a classic in the making, £315, The Conran Shop **8** The Intimate **glass set**, £72, Bib & Sola, is a clever piece of design – the small glass can act as a stopper for the carafe **9** Find this Da Terra cereal **bowl**, £14, among a colourful collection of crockery at Unique & Unity

WORDS LUCY BIRCH

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE **WHERE TO BUY** PAGE

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# DESIGN NEWS

From pretty paint colours to a sleek table, find a wealth of ideas for your home

## 3 of the best...

### GARDEN CHAIRS



**Nipprig lacquered rattan chair**, available in Green or Natural, £50, Ikea



The **Royal Lounge rattan chair** comes in Lime, Orange or Blue, £89, Out & Out Original



**Mika powder-coated metal and synthetic rope chair** in Green, £95, Habitat

WORDS JULIA EVANS

## WINGS OF DESIRE

The beautiful plumage of birds such as owls, goldfinches and hummingbirds inspire Fired Earth's new paint range. There are six shades to choose from including Peacock, shown here, £35.50 for 2.5L matt emulsion; £50 for 2.5L eggshell; £59 for 5L exterior masonry paint.



## NEW LOOKS



## FRESH FLORALS

Sanderson has delved into its archives to revive some of its mid-20th-century designs. This fabulous Chelsea wallpaper, £52 a roll, comes in seven colourways, including this original Pink and White.

## HOT PICKS



1



2



3



4

**1 PIMM'S O'CLOCK?** Oka's vibrant Bubble tumblers in Green and Blue, £54 for four, are perfect for summer drinks.

**2 TAKE IT EASY** Lounge among a pile of luxurious duck-filled velvet cushions in colours that

work beautifully together: Pink, Slate Green, Aubergine and this lovely Mustard. £35 each, House Doctor at Elect Design.

**3 TRENDSETTERS** Suki Cheema is part of the exciting John Lewis Design Collective. His gorgeous

handwoven woollen Bark Indigo rug, a contemporary take on an Aztec print, costs from £250.

**4 TOP TABLE** Add industrial chic to your home with this white marble and steel circular Alexis table, £320, French Connection.

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# BARGAIN NEWS

A round-up of the hottest homewares – all at great prices



## Treat yourself...

...to this retrolook clock, £8, Tesco Direct. It also comes in cream if the cool mint green doesn't suit your scheme.



## VERY VEGGIE

Look closely and you'll see that the striking motif on this bedlinen set is an artichoke pattern. With a 260 thread count and soft sateen finish, its luxe feel will help ensure sweet dreams. Artichokes double duvet cover, £50; pillowcases, from £10 each; all Secret Linen Store

WORDS JULIA EVANS



## NEW IN

### KITCHEN KIT

British brand Mini Moderns is known for its mid-century patterns, which are now available on everything from kettles to measuring jugs in retro colours including mustard and tangerine. From £19.95 for a butter dish at Bloomsbury.



3

## ACCENT PIECES



1



2



4

### 1 BACK TO NATURE

The Wild Flowers embroidered cushion, £15, Sainsbury's, will bring the outdoors in.

### 2 GET THE PARTY STARTED

This dip-dyed wooden fork, knife and spoon are all part of Talking Tables' Tropical Fiesta

range, which includes paper plates, £3.50 for 12; and pineapple bunting, £8.50 for 3m. The cutlery costs £5.50 for six forks, spoons and knives.

### 3 MARVELLOUS MONTAGE

Artist and designer Laura Oakes uses digital découpage to create

beautiful homeware including this pair of Go Seek storage boxes, £22, Debenhams.

### 4 LOVELY LINEN

Put the paper napkins away and use these pretty chambray stripe pure linen ones instead, £16 for four, Linea at House of Fraser.



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# ON TREND



1



2



3



4



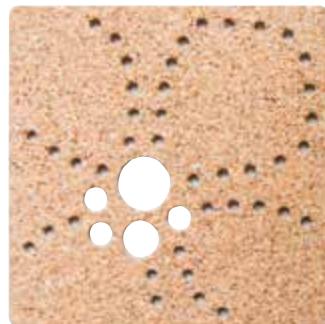
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8



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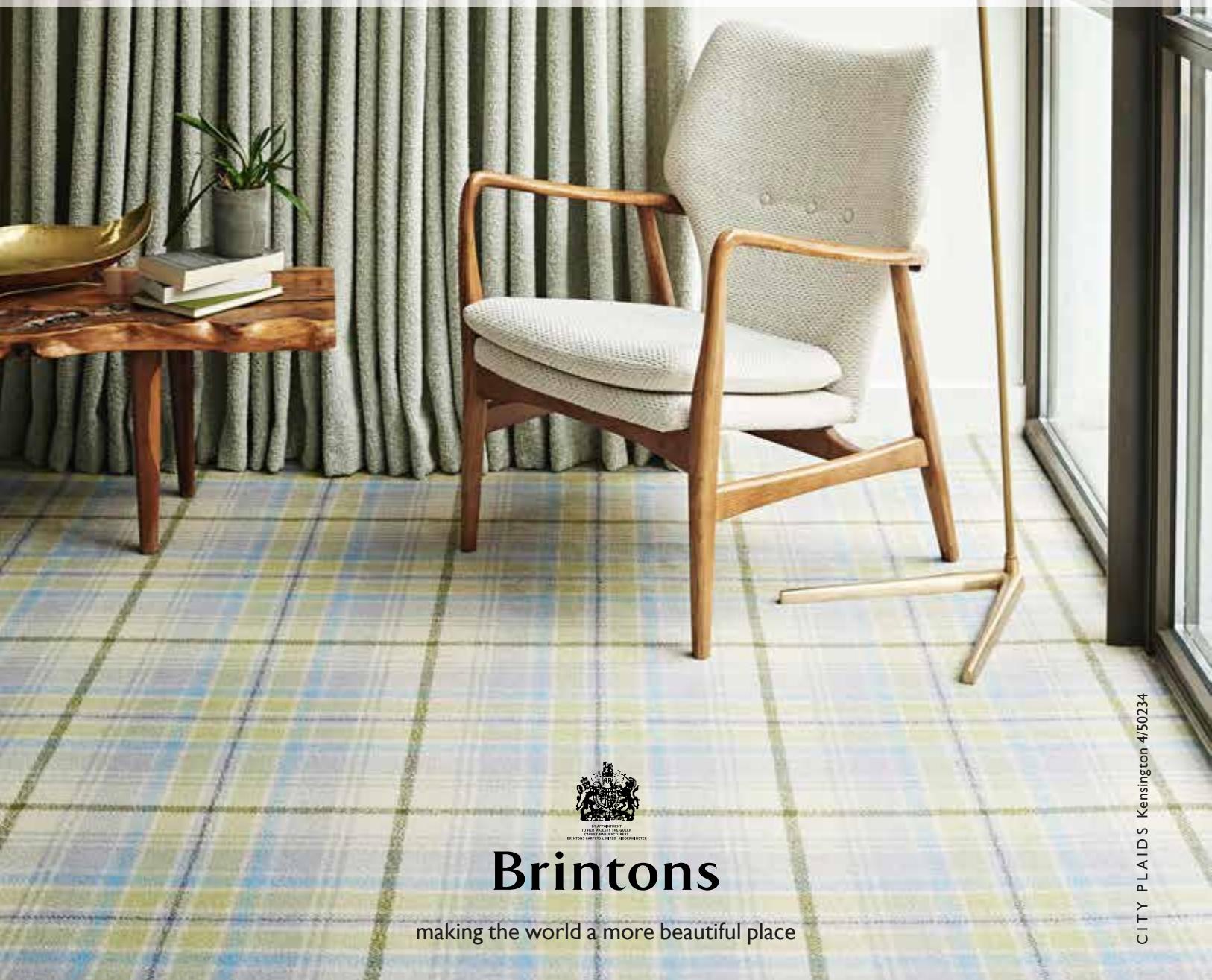
## NATURAL BEAUTY

Designers have embraced the stylishly versatile and sustainable qualities of cork

**1** The dial on the Clork **clock** is made from metal – the perfect contrast to the cork surround, £49.95, Iliasernst at Puik Art **2** Design company Mind the Cork produced this Terra **cushion**, £85, The Tab Collective, and love the fact that trees don't have to be cut down to harvest cork **3** The base of the Corkigami **chair** may be oak, but the seat is pure cork, £565, Matter of Stuff **4** Cotton lined, the clever **Adjust-a-Bowl** can be shaped however you like, £30, Forages **5** Cork has insulating properties, so the Whistler **teapot**, £28.50, E-Side, will keep tea warm **6** This Vitra Model 3 **side table** can also be used as a stool, £324, Amara **7** The Cork **table light**, £49.95, Eighty7 Design + Living is a great idea for any room **8** A perforated floral motif brings a touch of charm to the In the Garden **coaster**, £14 for four, Wolf & Badger **9** Hang the What a Corker **mirror** for a stylish Scandi look, from £140, Made North

The City Plaids collection by Brintons Carpets

# beauty by design



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# DECO UPDATE



WORDS AND STYLING KIERA BUCKLEY-JONES. PHOTOGRAPHS PAVEL DORNAK FOR HEARST STUDIOS

## OUTDOOR FABRICS

Come rain or shine, these waterproof fabrics will stay bright and beautiful

**1** Kirkby Design's bold **Brick** in Cobalt, £43 a metre, also comes in 11 other fab colours **2** The **Allegro Blue** fabric from Imogen Heath, £65 a metre, can be given an outdoor coating for an extra £5 a metre **3** **Snowboarding Stripes**, £30 a metre from The Stripes Company, would look amazing on a deckchair **4** Add some classic country style to your picnic with scatter cushions in **Deckchair Wicket Stripe** in Indigo, £14.50 a metre, Ian Mankin **5** The **Intaglio** in Turchese fabric, £95 a metre at Christopher Farr Cloth, was designed by Anni Albers, a pioneer of 20th-century modernism **6** Looking for something more understated? **Mataro** in Aqua, £83 a metre, Designers Guild, has a tweed look that's smart but subtle **7** Bring the tropics to your garden with the lush-looking **Kerkyra**, £63 a metre, Ionia collection, Osborne & Little **8** Reminiscent of traditional tile motifs, Casamance's **Torre Bleu**, £97.70 a metre, has standout style **9** You can rely on Ralph Lauren for chic fashion and we love its **Cricket Club Stripe** in Soleil, £117 a metre

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE **WHERE TO BUY** PAGE

# Tropical PARADISE

Exotic leaf prints, vivid green hues and rich wood tones create a verdant scheme



**Precious pieces**  
Mix and match beautifully shaped vases in lustrous finishes for a striking iridescent display

**Cool oasis** USE SEVERAL SHADES OF GREEN AND OFFSET THEM WITH BLOCKS OF WHITE. PALM PRINTS AND A GEOMETRIC RUG PROVIDE EYECATCHING PATTERNS

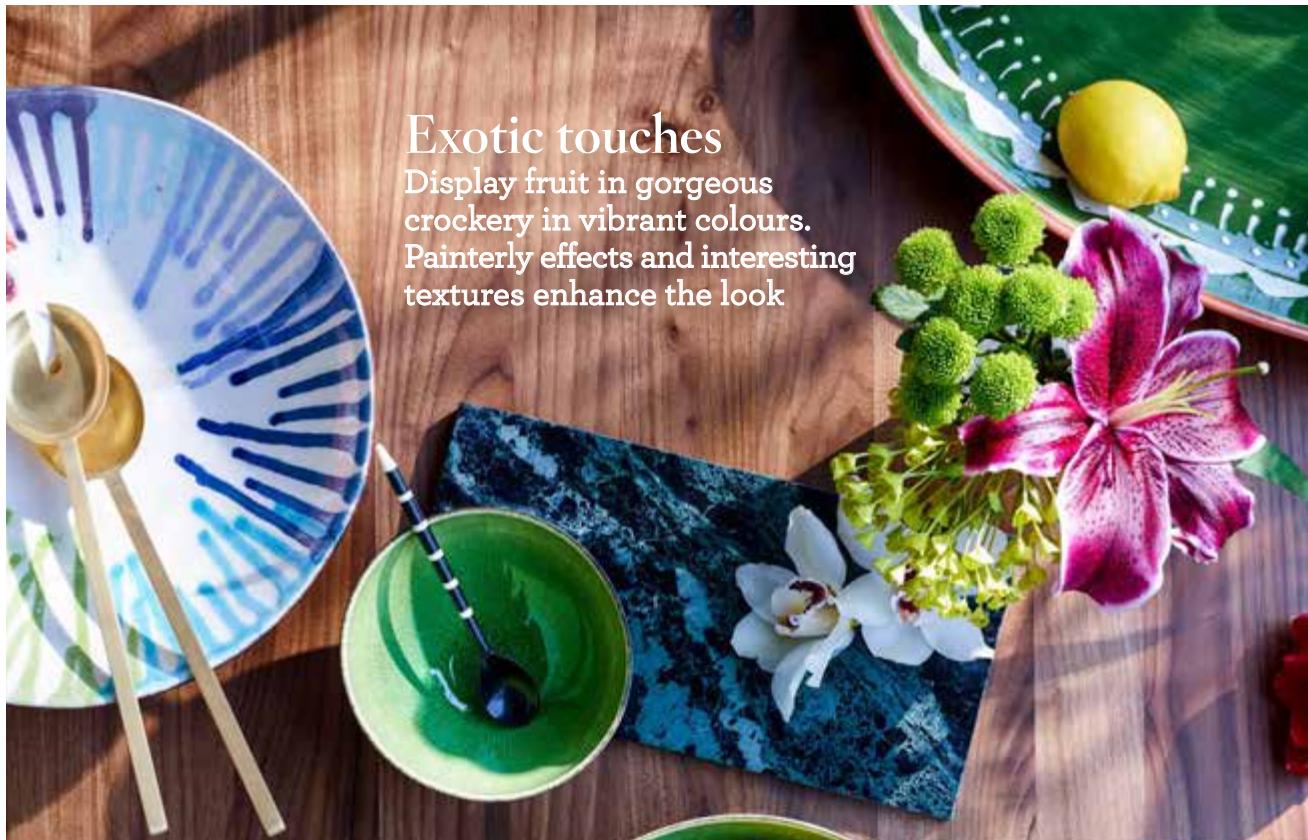




## Grand discovery

SET A POLISHED WALNUT TABLE WITH A RICH MIX OF COLOURED GLASS, GLOSSY GLAZED CROCKERY AND LINEN IN A JADE TONE





## Exotic touches

Display fruit in gorgeous crockery in vibrant colours. Painterly effects and interesting textures enhance the look



## Lush look

TEAM CONTEMPORARY  
FURNITURE WITH BOLD  
PALM-LEAF FABRICS FOR  
STUNNING CONTRAST



**Amazonian style** A PARED-BACK JUTE LAMPSHADE STANDS OUT AGAINST THE DRAMATIC, TROPICAL LEAF WALLPAPER



# Where to buy everything



## Cool oasis

**Walls** painted in Jasmine Leaf matt emulsion, £39 for 2.5L, Sanderson. **Curtains** made up in Launay pure linen in Basil 7725/45, £50 a metre, Romo. Iggy sofa in Egret herringbone, £1,130, sofa.com. Chevron cotton dhurrie, £285, Mahout. Chelsea marble coffee table and console table, £399 each, Content by Terence Conran. Coralie small walnut side table, £150; Mano oak cabinet, £850; Bip black and walnut floor lamp, £200; all Habitat. Moroccan leather pouffe in Turquoise, £130, Graham and Green. **Cushions** (l-r): Pampas medium linen in White/Viridis, £75, House of Hackney. Rectangular velvet in Light Blue, £30, Graham and Green. Passiflora Zest by Fanny Shorter, £65, Amara. Felt Gypsy in Yellow, £30, Graham and Green.



## Grand discovery

**Walls** painted in Grecian Green matt emulsion, £39 for 2.5L, Sanderson. **Curtains** made up in Launay Pure Linen in Obsidian 7725/60; Shamrock 7725/43; and Verdigris 7725/41; all £50 a metre, Romo. Chevron Black and Stone jute rug, £320, Heal's. Nevada extending dining table, £839, Barker and Stonehouse. Wishbone chairs in Dark Wood, £108 each, Bluesmtree. Inferno Daley lampshades in Teal, £125 each, House of Hackney. Boeme Trifa velvet cushion (left) £70; Boeme Emaline cushion, £75; both Heal's. Runner made up in

## Exotic touches

Passiflora Chartreuse by Fanny Shorter, £95, Amara. Tarovine Large Linen in Midnight Green, £148, House of Hackney. **On cabinet** (l-r): Tall vase, find similar at Dartington Crystall. Giant gold display bottle vase, £49, Rockett St George. Green parrot on perch, £45, Graham and Green. Usagi green vase with handles, £30, Habitat. **On side table**: Fabulous faux aloe pot plant, £299, Rockett St George. **On coffee table**: EA Deco round cup basket, £30 for three, Heal's. **On console table** (l-r): Fabulous faux succulent pot plant, £75; tall brass and glass hurricane candleholder, £48; both Rockett St George. Hexagon brass pot, £38.50; Hexagon brass vase, £38.50; **Palm print**, £85; all Holly's House. Ribba frame (painted), £16, Ikea

## Lush look

Blu Dot Stash desk In Graphite Ash, £395, Heal's. Mika Rope chair, £95, Habitat. **Curtains** made up in Manila fabric in Green/Ivory, £52 a metre, Sanderson. Hector Bibendum pendant light, £199, Original BTC. Fejka artificial potted fig, £8; Fejka artificial bamboo, £15; Mandel Grey-Brown pots, £2 each; all Ikea. Black metal plantstands (small), £29; (large), £34; both Holly's House. Gold Pineapple bookends, £45 for the pair, Rockett St George. Garner two-drawer file, £20; Garner magazine file, £8; Frances Metal kiwi bird, £9; all Habitat. Three head cactus candle, £19, Rockett St George. Other items, stylist's own



## Amazonian style

Launay Pure Linen in Shamrock 7725/43, £50 a metre, Romo. **On table** (l-r): Cesar glass vase, £40; Sintra cereal bowls, £8 each; Sintra side plates, £8 each; all Habitat. Large yellow glass bottle, £55, Graham and Green. Gold pineapple ornament, £29, Rockett St George. Jug, find similar at Rockett St George. Jasper Jensen glasses, £60 for six in a wooden crate, Heal's. Green bucket vase, £99, English Antique Glass. Alvito terracotta platter, £30; Esterban grey glass vase, £30; both Habitat

Witherbee pillowcases, £58 a pair, Anthropologie. Ultimate Hungarian goose down pillows, £55, Soak & Sleep. Green flower cushion, £120; Oatmeal Fang cushion, £25; both Holly's House. Biba dark grey and white geometric vase, £39, Barker and Stonehouse. Ceramic cactus vase, £68, Holly's House. Soda Fountain Ice Cream Collection glass, £8, Anthropologie. Junction table lamp in Brass, £135, Heal's. **Plants** in garden, Ikea. Other items, stylist's own

# ‘Building your own home isn’t just a dream – anyone can do it!’

Everyone associates TV presenter Kevin McCloud with the very grandest of designs, but his mission is to build affordable homes to help families onto the property ladder. He explains why custom build is so close to his heart

**I**t's hardly a surprise to learn that Kevin McCloud is used to people stopping him in the street and asking how they can improve their property. 'The most popular question is: "I'm just about to put a loft extension in. What do you think?" My answer, without fail, is "What a good idea." I wouldn't discourage anyone from having a vision and improving their home,' he says.

'And I'm not going to get cross if people stop me and ask my opinion either. Great thinking, new inspiration and the courage to do something about it is exactly what our country needs right now.'

The truth is, Kevin welcomes any ideas, suggestions or solutions for the current housing shortage. As a father of four, it's a matter incredibly close to his own heart. 'I have two children trying to get onto the property ladder at the moment, and it's a pretty dismal situation for them and millions of other young people,' he says. 'They're living in rented property, so spending all their spare cash on paying that rent each month.'

'We all see those articles about the bank of Mum and Dad and young people co-buying with a mate or two, but actually these are desperate measures in increasingly desperate times. We are the most densely populated country in Europe, and have the largest housing crisis. There's little

land released and much of the land is in tremendously protected green-belt areas. Land is so expensive, so builders have learned to build far more cheaply. Then construction prices rose and now land values are also marching upwards. There's also far less expertise because people are leaving the industry. I'm enormously despondent about this because at the end of the day it's all about numbers now.'

Kevin believes this is having a detrimental effect on the quality of the housing currently being built. 'Everyone is obsessed with the quantity of housing and the price of housing. Nobody talks about the quality of life, the quality of great construction, the beauty of proper planning and skilled architecture. All my life, I've stood for quality and I wish I could see a simple solution,' he says.

One idea, Kevin feels, is to look towards the buoyant housing market in Germany. 'I'd like to see a rental market as sophisticated and efficient as Germany's, where there's plenty of land released to people by local governments, and a controlled flow in response to the demand,' he says. 'Land values are low, so people don't buy houses to simply make more money. Instead, they see a home as somewhere to live and take huge pride in their properties.'

'Meanwhile here in the UK, we build the smallest houses in Europe. We can't build

them smaller still to squeeze in more. Instead, it comes down to employing great architects. They're the ones who can work out how we can build clever designs with great ideas and of the high quality that everyone wants.'

'This quality is key to everything. At the end of the day, if a home looks cheap and substandard, nobody will want it. We all love country cottages and Georgian mansions and pretty terraced houses – these are buildings of quality, which is why we all hanker after them. We won't create homes like this in the future if we're trying to cut costs.'

One solution for individuality and quality lies in custom-building. Kevin says: 'I really believe that building your own home is a way forward. It isn't just a dream limited to the very rich or the adventurous. Anyone could do it – young people, retired couples, disabled people – anyone.'

'Apart from the obvious benefits such as saving stamp duty, you get a bigger, better and greener home. You have more involvement and interest right from the start, and it's also great for developers because they get an idea of who their customers are and what they really want.'

'Meanwhile, with customers looking closely at the product at every stage of the build, the tradesmen are under more

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'Quality is the key to everything,' says Kevin. 'If a home looks cheap, nobody will want it'



**Graven Hill (left and above) in Oxfordshire is a new site with opportunities for custom- community- and self-building based on a scheme in Almere, Holland (top right). To find out more, visit [gravenhill.org.uk](http://gravenhill.org.uk)**



scrutiny and therefore the quality is higher. In the end, with custom-building you get a better house and you've seen it through yourself from start to finish.'

Just as inspiring, says Kevin, are the community building schemes, where people come together to build a block of flats or houses. 'A great example of this is in Bicester in Oxfordshire, where a new town is being created at Graven Hill. The idea is based on a scheme in Almere, Holland and the planning regulations are loose.

'Two thousand new homes will be created, which is going to be a *Grand Designs* heaven for everybody. I'll be following and filming the progress of 10 different householders building their own homes there.'

In the 16 years that Kevin has been filming the building of dreams in *Grand Designs*, he's seen huge changes. 'When we started, the concept of building your own sustainable home using material from your own woodland was considered way out there,' he says. 'We thought we were demonstrating an extreme construction at the time. But now, using sustainable timber for your home and furniture is widespread.'

'Government legislation has made a huge difference. They set targets to help us achieve a green culture, and a whole

**'With custom-building you get a better house and you've seen it through yourself from start to finish,' SAYS KEVIN**

industry has sprung up to meet those regulations. Without these targets, we wouldn't have the lower emissions, hybrid cars or renewable energy we see now.

'You might argue that the fact we have to recycle won't change the way people act. But in fact, it does make a huge impact. Each year I choose 10 top Green Heroes awarded to the best eco-innovations on the market. I search for products that do more than just doff their caps towards the environment. There's a great satisfaction in finding a product that actually changes the way factories work. It may be a small workshop making cardboard lampshades, but behind those lampshades is a brilliant idea.'

Meanwhile, Kevin continues to make his own impact on the housing market with his low-cost eco-housing company HAB teaming with housing company GreenSquare Group to launch more affordable homes in

Stroud. 'Some houses are privately owned and the others socially rented, but you can't tell the difference in quality,' he says.

'We set out to encourage people to socialise and form a community. Building an eco-sustainable house is just the start. Turning it into a home for the future – that's where the real innovation and the fun begins.' **HB**

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**Are you interested in a custom-build house? House Beautiful has launched a collection of homes based on a loft living idea, mixing open-plan, multi-functional areas with private spaces. Find out more on page 64**



**One of these is full of health benefits and costs 33p.\*  
The other one's an apple.**

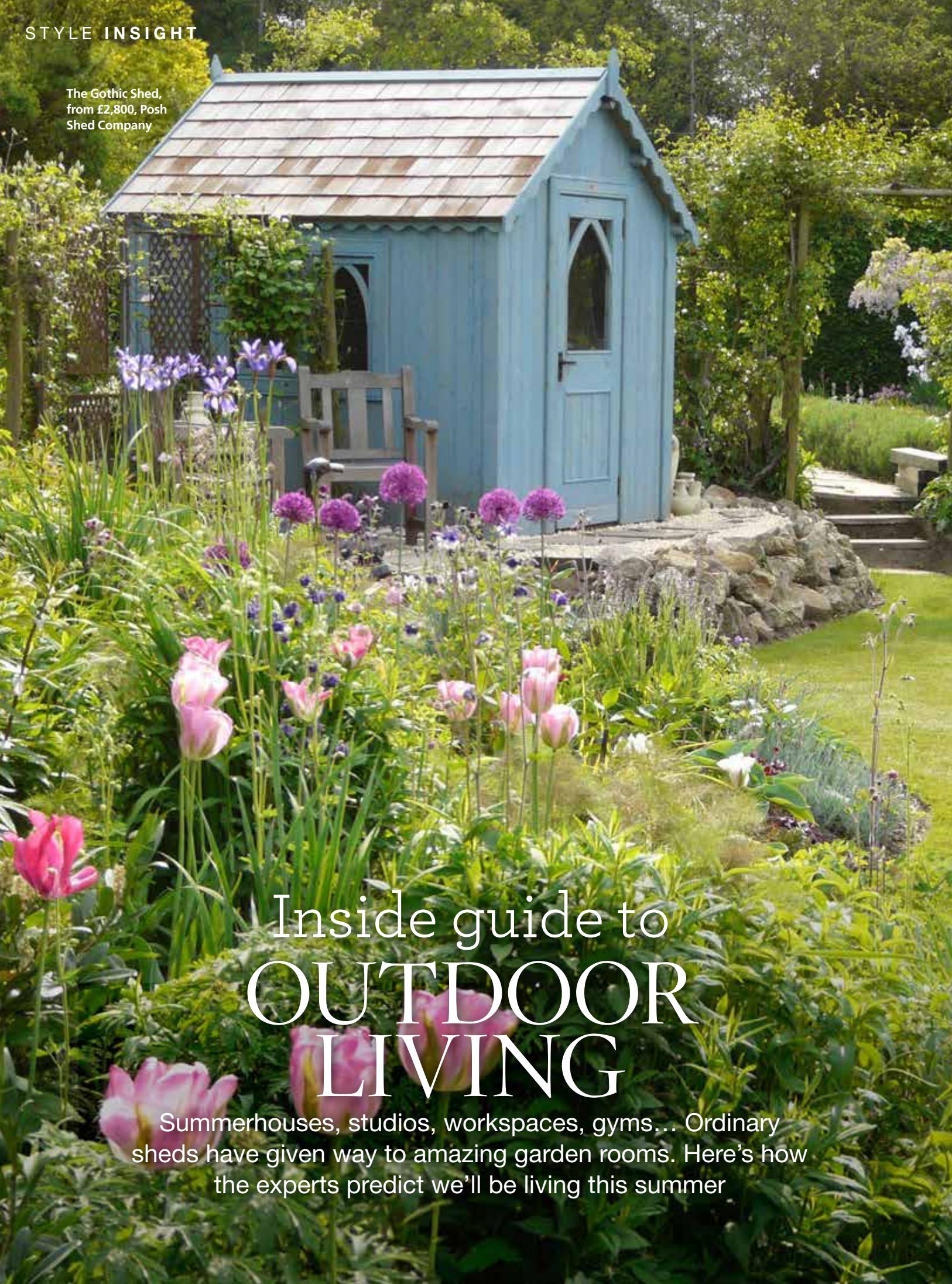
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\*The cost of a meal of IAMS is based on the recommended feeding amount for a 4kg cat, and the price seen on tesco.com on 17.03.2015. Your cat may eat more or less depending on age, temperament and activity.

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from £2,800, Posh  
Shed Company



# Inside guide to **OUTDOOR LIVING**

Summerhouses, studios, workspaces, gyms... Ordinary sheds have given way to amazing garden rooms. Here's how the experts predict we'll be living this summer



## QUIET SANCTUARY

RICHARD FROST

When his children were young, Richard started building playhouses, setting up the Playhouse Company in 1998 and adding the Posh Shed Company in 2007.

**INSPIRATION** My father is a wooden-toy maker so my love of making things out of wood dates back to my childhood. We pride ourselves on our customer service; paramount is listening to clients' needs and taking inspiration from the settings where our sheds will be located. It's important to see if there are any hazards to build around such as manhole covers, or if, for example, a site is shady and the shed would benefit from a roof window, especially if it's going to be used as an outdoor office.

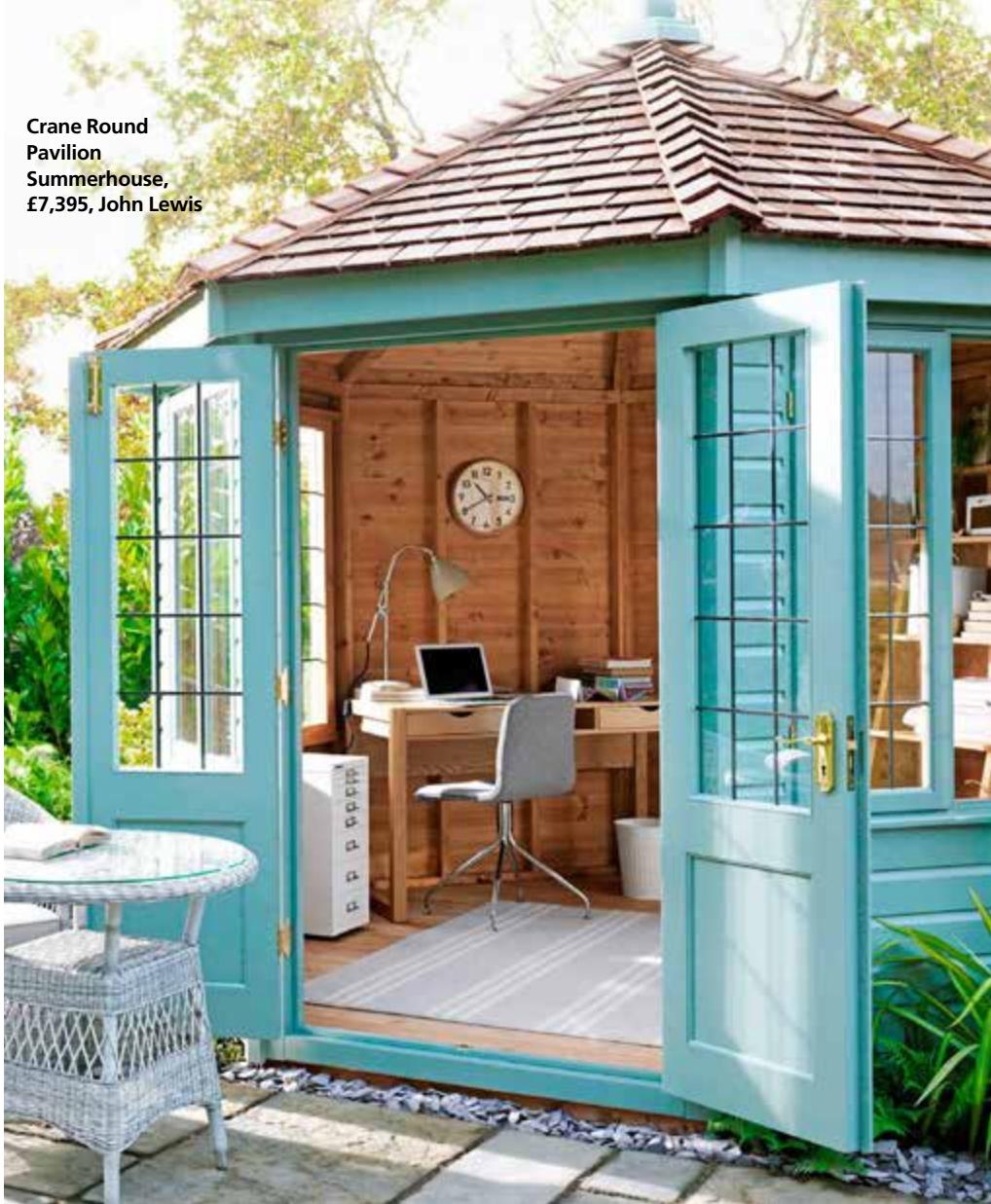
**TRENDS** People want their sheds to be features as well as somewhere to keep garden equipment. Those who work from home may prefer to have somewhere apart from their living space. Or they can be a place for people to pursue hobbies, such as sewing, where they can keep items out and not have to pack them away at the end of the day. We respond to this by offering insulation and painting interiors, adding skirting boards and making the internal space cosy, inviting and homely – a sanctuary, not a shed!

The idea of multi-functional space is also a trend; such as a playhouse for children and a storage area for garden furniture.

**FAVOURITE** I love the design of our Gothic Shed (left), with its arched frames in the doors and windows, and scalloped fascia and ridge board.

**TIP** As the building's probably going to be there for quite some time, make sure it has a good sturdy door with proper locks. Also, think about what you might use it for in a few years' time and be sure the building can cope with a change of use. A shed may initially be for storage, but eventually you may want an office space or occasional camping-out location for the children.

Crane Round  
Pavilion  
Summerhouse,  
£7,395, John Lewis



## NATURE ALL AROUND

NICOLA GIDLOW

After training as a chartered accountant, Nicola joined John Lewis in 1979 as a sales assistant and has worked her way up to buyer for outdoor living.

**INSPIRATION** Visiting trade shows and working with the in-house design team helps me to identify trends and create innovative designs. I also visit other countries on buying trips to see the ideas surfacing across the globe.

**TRENDS** People now use their garden as an extension of their living area, and more

customers are looking to put up a structure that will allow them to adapt to the changing demands on the family home. Our summerhouses and garden studios, such as the FSC-certified Crane Round Pavilion (above), are a great way of creating extra space and a focal point in the garden. Also, with more people working from home, customers often want to create a versatile space such as an office that can also double up as a gym. For parents increasingly finding that their children are returning home after college, studios provide a retreat and, if needed, an extra bedroom. The Crane range of summerhouses and studios have consistently been a top seller.

**FAVOURITE** The Farmer's Cottage sphere range is my favourite as the design is so different from summerhouses and it can allow you to sit undercover outside, even in the darkest weather, and enjoy the feeling of being in the middle of nature.

**TIP** Be clear what you're going to use the structure for before you buy, so you know exactly how much usable floor space you'll need.

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## BESPOKE DESIGN MARC SALOMON

**Despite having no formal training in carpentry, Marc built his first studio in his garden in 2001, a venture that led to the founding of London Garden Studios.**

**INSPIRATION** Walking on London's Hampstead Heath or in Regent's Park fills me with ideas. I want my studios to be backdrops for beautiful planting as well as being useful, light, airy and practical places to work in. My customers don't

want to make an architectural statement or end up with something that looks like a spaceship; nor do their neighbours!

**TRENDS** Customers are steering away from all-white interiors at the moment and going for brighter colours, wallpapers and more individual interior finishes. Due to the permitted development limits, ceiling heights tend to be quite low so I incorporate skylights into most designs. Hardwood doors and windows give a softer look than aluminium and will also weather to the same colour as the cedar used in the building.

**FAVOURITE** One I built in Hampstead; the client was an amazing gardener and the studio was right next to the Heath and had fantastic views over London.

**TIP** Opt for a bespoke service. To maximise your space, you need a supplier who's happy to build a studio specifically for your needs. As it's being built, you might also want to make adjustments to the positions of the windows and doors, and a bespoke service offers that flexibility.



## WONDERFUL WOOD PAUL EDMUNDS

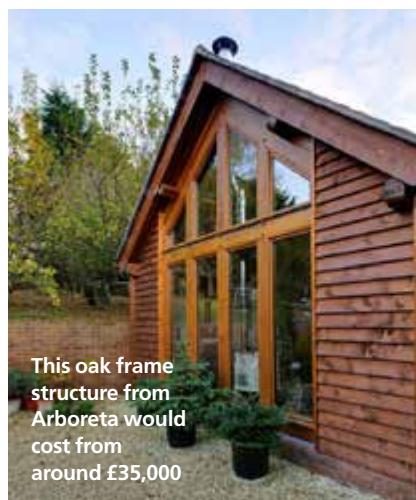
**A life-long love of wood has influenced the work of Arboreta and Welsh Oak Frame group director Paul.**

**INSPIRATION** After my apprenticeship in 1977, I bought a 300-year-old felled oak tree for just £12 and had it milled down to build with it. Now part of it forms the staircase in my house. This experience helped shape my career and led to the development of Welsh Oak Frame and its sister company Arboreta. I still enjoy working with oak.

**TRENDS** A lot of people are replacing their PVC conservatories with an oak-frame structure. The beauty of oak framing is that it's like a jigsaw, so is quick to put together – we once completed a garden room in 24 hours. We get requests for a wide range of structures, from popular post and beam to traditional cottage-style buildings.

**FAVOURITE** We built a bespoke oak frame garden annexe (below) that was independent of the main house but close enough to connect to its electrics. All on one level, it consists of a well-insulated open-plan kitchen/living area as well as a bedroom and bathroom for a couple who may live in it when they're older.

**TIP** Make sure your design allows for year round living. Prepare for the winter and think about incorporating underfloor heating and a woodburning stove.



## THREE TO WATCH



### ISLAND PARADISE

**CHRIS HODGE**

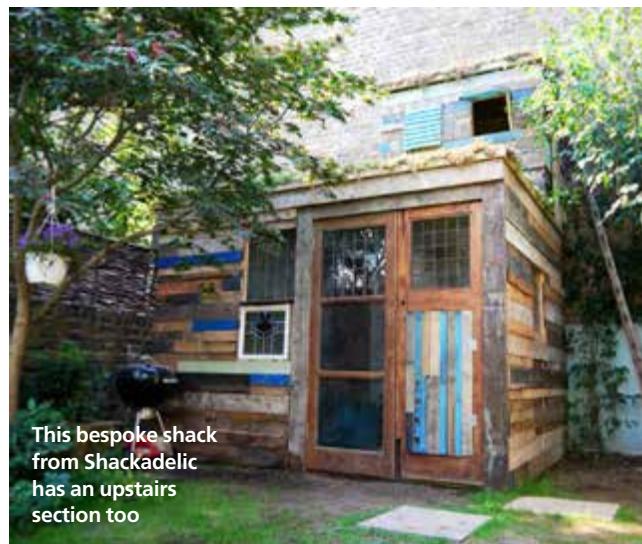
Building a ramshackle shed on an allotment led to Chris setting up Shackadelic in 2011.

**INSPIRATION** Often obvious things, like a shot in a magazine of a house on the beach. When I was building my children's Wendy House I found an old trowel that looked like a door handle so I made it into one.

**TRENDS** People want informal spaces; they like island-style hangouts and to live in their gardens rather than just look at them.

**FAVOURITE** A cabin at the end of a garden with a bar, stove, cinema and study that's under construction in Esher. At the side is a huge open-plan area with trees growing through the roof and hammocks.

**TIP** Check planning regulations before you get too carried away. You're allowed to do quite a lot, but different rules apply to conservation areas



This bespoke shack from Shackadelic has an upstairs section too



### PERFECT HARMONY

**STEVEN DAVIS**

A love of the outdoors led landscape and garden designer Steven to set up London Garden Rooms in 2005.

**INSPIRATION** I'm inspired by surroundings whenever I'm outdoors; I love seeing how nature and buildings fit together. It's a very important part of the design process.

**TRENDS** Moving house has become so expensive that people are looking for ways to maximise their existing space. A garden room is a way of doing that.

**FAVOURITE** A garden room we built in Stoke Newington in a tiny space. It incorporated a bathroom at the back and fabulous flood lighting and lots of glass at the front. It looks a million dollars!

**TIP** Insulate properly. Even if the upfront cost is higher it's worth it. Otherwise it'll be freezing in winter and more expensive to heat



Studios from £15,000, London Garden Rooms



### VINTAGE STYLE

**OLIVIER LUCCHETTA**

Having run his own linen company, Olivier joined new Belgian shed firm Atmosphère et Bois at the end of 2013.

**INSPIRATION** Natural textures and colours, especially those found in wood, whether the oak flooring of an antique railway wagon or the distressed grey boards reclaimed from barns. These are the ingredients that fed into our new style of lodge, Barn Box.

**TRENDS** People love a heritage story and there's a big trend for vintage wood flooring with real wear and tear on it, so our sheds, which can be ordered in flat packs, are proving popular. They also have good eco credentials.

**FAVOURITE** The unique Madrier déco boards, which are all hand cut with an axe. **HB**

**TIP** Think of your shed as a refuge and a little house all of your own where you can really enjoy nature



Barn Box lodge, from £14,400, at [hollowaysofludlow.com](http://hollowaysofludlow.com)



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# MINI to the MAX

Great design and enduring style bring chic to China Cooper's home – which is what you'd expect from the granddaughter of the Mini Cooper's creator

WORDS JO LEEVERS PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID WOOLLEY



## KITCHEN

Two narrow rooms were knocked through to create a bigger space. The glossy units are by London Kitchen Shop and the travertine floor is hardwearing with a very forgiving pattern

### LIVING ROOM

A mix of styles, from ornate to mid-century, creates a sophisticated but relaxed look. The chairs are hand-me-downs and the mirror is from Three Angels



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'I'm edging towards all things mid-century. It feels so much cleaner and simpler,' SAYS CHINA

LIVING ROOM

Antlers, an olive tree and the honed grain of a vintage Ercol coffee table bring a simple naturalism to the Victorian house. The sofa is by Matthew Hilton for SCP





**D**esigner China Cooper's first love was French style, but these days a Scandi look makes her heart beat faster. 'I'll always have a soft spot for my 19th-century mirrors,' she says, 'but I'm edging towards all things mid-century. It feels so much cleaner and simpler.' Since renovating her three-bedroom Victorian semi in Brighton with partner Tom Woolley, a landscaper, China, whose grandfather co-founded the Cooper car company, has set her favourite Provençal touches against ice-cool Nordic influences for a fresh, family-friendly look.

In the living room, carved cabriole legs and plasterwork scrolls are balanced by the clean lines of an Ercol coffee table, while fluffy sheepskins and woven seagrass add to the stripped-back, natural blend. Then there are the potted olive trees, with their silvery-grey leaves, one of which sits next to the sofa. 'I spotted them on Swedish stylist Lotta Agaton's blog, which I love,' says China. 'They aren't really meant to be houseplants, but if they begin to wilt I put them outside for a bit to perk them up. I like the fact that you'd never expect to see

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**KITCHEN**  
A blackboard wall allows the children to get creative. Ecos Organic Paints sells blackboard paint in 180 different shades. Lookalike Bertoia chairs provide seating

**DINING SPACE**  
China loves both French and Scandi style, so in this section of the living room she's teamed a French farmhouse dresser and an ornate chandelier with more pared-back pieces such as the simple chairs

**EXTERIOR**  
The front drive of this Victorian semi in Brighton gives pride of place to the Mini Cooper



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'Whether it's a car, a bike, a dress or furniture, design is all about it looking good and working brilliantly,' SAYS CHINA



#### MAIN BEDROOM

Juxtaposing glamour and simplicity is what China's style is all about, hence the mix of mirrored and wooden furniture. For a similar sideboard, try Very

#### BEDSIDE TABLE

A rustic stool is the perfect perch for the graphic poster by Swedish artist David Ehrenstråhl. The light is from Original BTC

#### SHOWER ROOM

A wall-hung basin makes the room seem more spacious. For a similar basin, try Bathstore. Find woven baskets at Tine K Home

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**THE ORIGINAL PAINTED KITCHEN COMPANY - SINCE 1972**



them inside but so far they're really thriving.'

Upstairs, the bedrooms of the couple's children, Arthur, three, and two-year-old Alma, embrace the funkier side of Scandi style with witty designs by Little Red Stuga and By Nord. China and Tom's room is more sedate, with a definite simplicity, but thanks to a mirrored sideboard and glittering gold buttons on the pillows it also has a hint of the French glamour that China loves.

China, who was named after the David Bowie song *China Girl*, got into interiors after a career in fashion, designing her own-label silk dresses and luxe lingerie for Fox & Rose. However, the worlds of toddlers and fashion didn't keep the same hours so she's been channelling her creativity into their home.

Being a Cooper (her grandfather also taught Steve McQueen his track-driving skills), China also adds her fashion expertise to the latest family business – Cooper Bikes. 'Whether it's a car, a bike, a dress or furniture, design is all about it looking good and working brilliantly,' she says. **HB**

● Find out more about Cooper Bikes at [cooperbikes.com](http://cooperbikes.com)



#### ARTHUR'S ROOM

**A vintage chest of drawers adds a dash of mid-century style. Try Junk Deluxe for similar. The poster is from allposters.co.uk**

#### ALMA'S ROOM

**Primary colours and Nordic designs stand out against Dulux Pure Brilliant White walls. The bedding is from By Nord and the Oeuf NYC Sparrow cot is available at Nubie**

#### READING CORNER

**Arthur's favourite books are displayed on shelving. Use Ikea's Ribba picture ledges to recreate this book display**



## EXTENSION

Sue and David's passion for mid-century design is evident throughout their home, particularly in the glass-fronted extension. The armchair is Knoll's iconic Womb chair from Skandium and above the doors to the new patio is George Nelson's Ball clock for Vitra from Heal's



## HOME PROFILE

### WHO LIVES HERE

Sue Black, 47, director of a property company, her husband David, 46, a cartoonist, and their sons Alfie, 14, and Sonny, 10

### THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom, detached neo-Georgian house built in 1969 in Barnet, Hertfordshire

**PRICE £560,000**

**MONEY SPENT £230,000**

**WHAT IT'S WORTH NOW**

£1.5 million



#### SEATING AREA

Wood panelling in the extension looks warm and adds character. For a similar cushion, try [notonthehighstreet.com](http://notonthehighstreet.com)

# Mid-century MODERNIST

An amazing view sold this sixties house to one couple who have transformed it into an open-plan home filled with treasured pieces

WORDS RUBY ROGERS PHOTOGRAPHY WILL PRYCE/AMBIENCE IMAGES

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## LIVING SPACE

**Aspen sofas from Content by Terence Conran are positioned to make the most of the view from the extension**



## WORKSTATION

**The kitchen island houses the hob. Sue chose a low-decibel cooker hood to keep noise levels down in the open-plan space**



## KITCHEN UNITS

**Handleless units give the room a streamlined look**



Houses are sometimes bought because of their potential, rather than their existing state, and this was certainly the case with this detached property in Barnet, Hertfordshire, when Sue and David Black came across it 12 years ago. The previous owner had updated it very little since it was built in 1969, but the couple fell in love with the scenic views from the rear window.

'As you can imagine, it was all pretty basic,' says Sue, 'but the back of the house overlooks acres of farmland. Every year the farmer plants a different crop so the view is always changing. There's nothing but trees and fields and a small village in the distance. It makes you feel like you're in the heart of the country.'

The location may have won Sue and David over, but the house wasn't just dated, it also felt cramped. Their solution was to build a large extension to maximise the view and create space for an open-plan kitchen, living and dining room, as well as a playroom for sons Alfie and Sonny.

Although getting planning permission proved tough, the couple worked closely with a London-based architect to create a contemporary glass-fronted structure that takes its cue from Sue and David's fondness for nature, with wooden elements incorporated into the design. 'Now the doors to the garden slide back to create a seamless transition between the indoor and outdoor areas,' says Sue.

Inside, the couple have created a striking living space that is a homage to their love of mid-century modern design. The living area features iconic pieces such as Knoll's Womb chair by Eero Saarinen and George Nelson's Ball clock for Vitra. 'They're just so beautifully crafted,

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**DINING AREA**

A few rustic pieces, such as this farmhouse table found on eBay, balance the more industrial look of items such as the cast-metal Augustin pendants from Holloways of Ludlow

'The layout makes this a fabulous party house... but more importantly it means we can happily spend time together as a family,' SAYS SUE



## SNUG

Eames-inspired DSW chairs and a replica of Eero Saarinen's Tulip table lend a designer look to the boys' hangout space



## PATIO

The extension includes a patio that connects the boys' snug with the open-plan kitchen, dining and living space



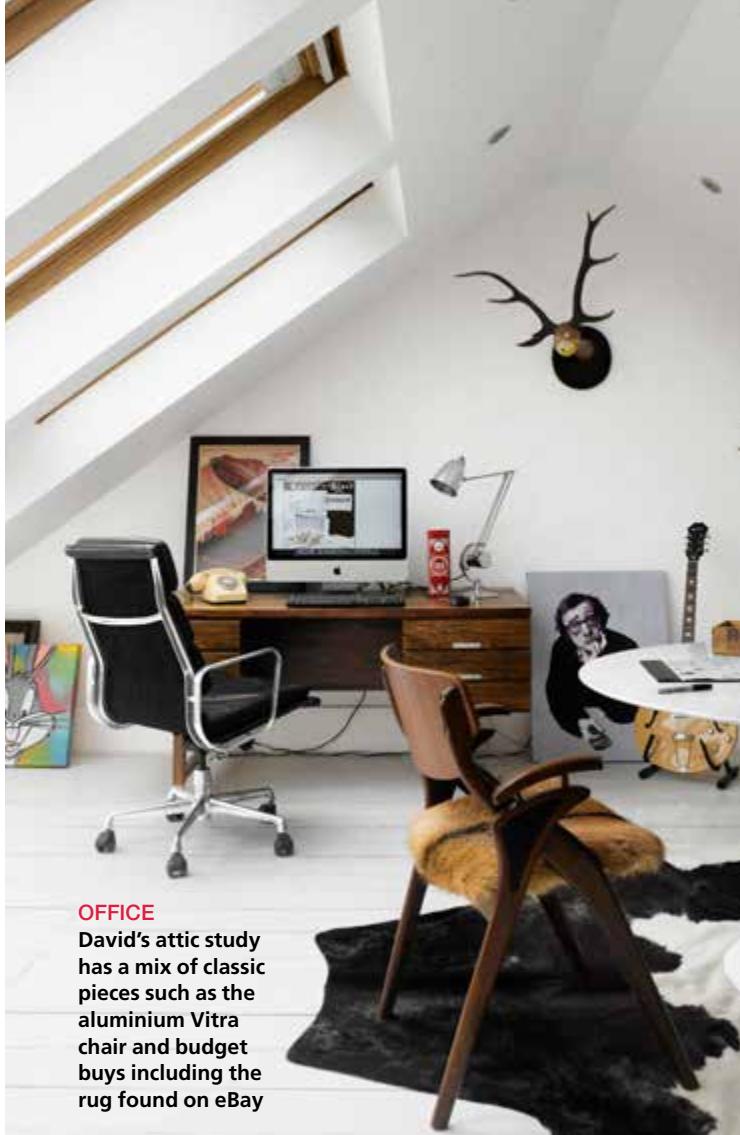
so as well as being lovely pieces they're also great investments,' says Sue. 'And because each item has its own story, I feel as though there's life in the designs.'

The dining area has a more eclectic look with secondhand treasures mixed and matched with custom-made furniture, bargains bought online and, of course, one or two reproduction mid-century modern items. It's a collection that's taken time to grow, with Sue and David gradually adding pieces. There's a French farmhouse table that Sue found on eBay, a wooden sideboard that was discovered in an antiques shop and a custom-made bookshelf that the Blacks have cleverly used to divide their open-plan space.

'Each area has a different function but at no point did we want anyone to feel shut off and left out,' says Sue. 'Having said that, the kids are! We've created a separate area for them on the other side of the extension. As they're getting older they like to have friends over, so it gives us all a bit of privacy.'

The kitchen space was designed to be practical and functional with curved cabinetry that allows the units to flow. 'The children were quite young at the time the kitchen was put in so I didn't want too many sharp edges,' says Sue. Corian was chosen for the worktops because of its reputation for durability, while a custom-made stainless-steel plinth adds an industrial edge to the white units. 'The layout of the ground floor makes this a fabulous party house with easy access to the garden, which is ideal during the summer,' says Sue, 'but more importantly, it means we can happily spend time together as a family.'

● Find out more about architects Paul Archer Design at [paularcherdesign.co.uk](http://paularcherdesign.co.uk)

**OFFICE**

David's attic study has a mix of classic pieces such as the aluminium Vitra chair and budget buys including the rug found on eBay

**MAIN BEDROOM**

Reclaimed parquet flooring from eBay is the perfect foil for more pared-back items such as the George Nelson Cigar Bubble sconce

**MANAGING an extension**

- ✖ While simple extensions might not require an architect, the benefit of hiring one is that they can also help navigate the planning process and manage your builder.
- ✖ Be flexible. It could be that you have a vision that isn't practical. If this is the case, work with your architect to look at other options and come to a compromise.
- ✖ Be prepared for your project to run over schedule and always have a contingency fund – it's recommended that you set aside around 10 per cent of the total cost of the project.
- ✖ Keep calm – there are many decisions to make and at times it can be stressful so always keep the end goal in sight. And remember – most extensions will add value to your home. **HB**

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE **WHERE TO BUY** PAGE



NIPPRIG green armchair £50

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Every corner of the garden has a place for sitting and enjoying the peace and quiet. The path looks as though it's been there for years but is a new addition

# ON AN IMPRESSIVE SCALE

Decorating and furnishing this Sussex barn conversion required its owners to think big

WORDS SIAN LEWIS/NARRATIVES PHOTOGRAPHY JULIA TOMS

## EXTERIOR

Christine and Graham's home is surrounded by open fields and beautiful gardens that Graham landscaped himself

## HOME PROFILE

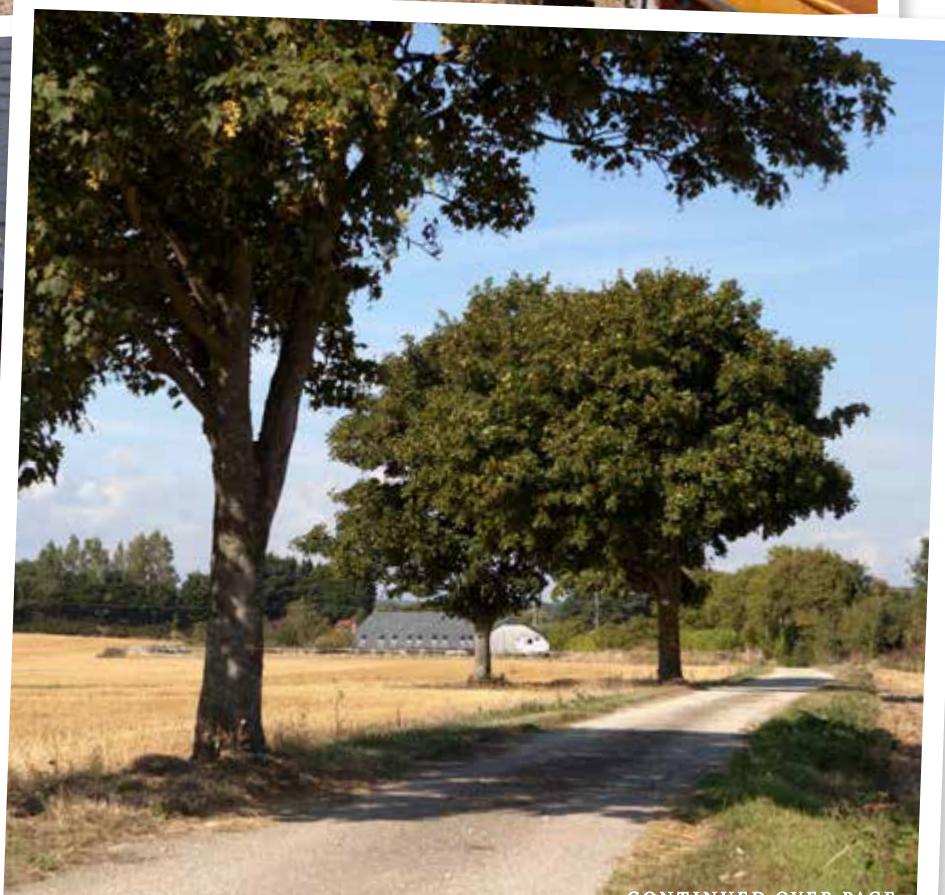
**WHO LIVES HERE** Christine Inwood, 66, a retired sales rep, and her partner Graham Bryant, 59, who runs a training company

**THE PROPERTY** A four-bedroom flint barn conversion near Chichester in West Sussex

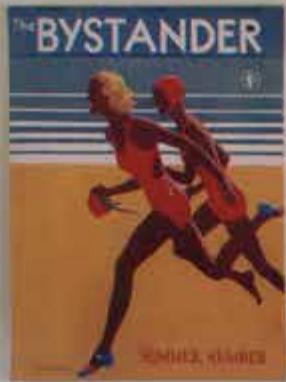
**PRICE** £575,000

**MONEY SPENT** £30,000 on furnishings and approximately £35,000 on the garden

**WHAT IT'S WORTH NOW** £895,000



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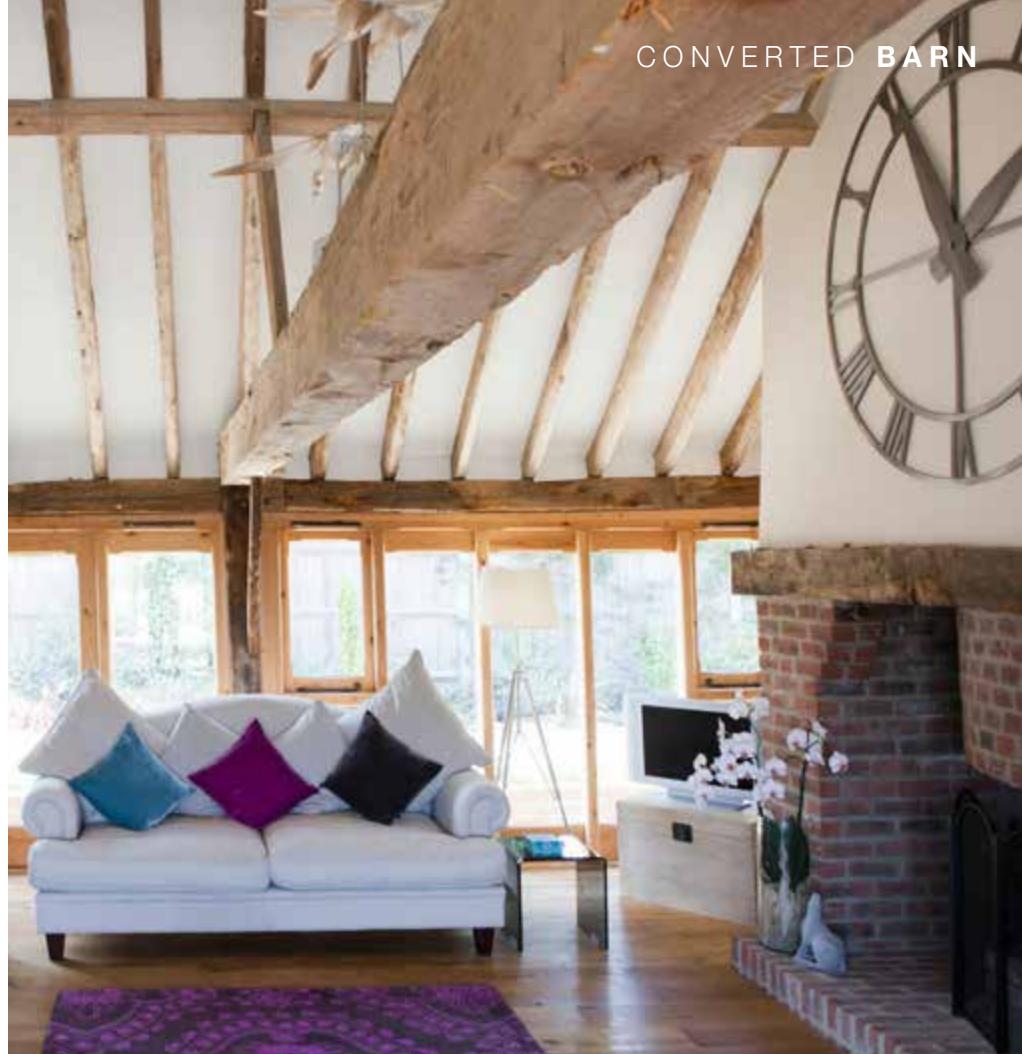
A dining room table set with a white tablecloth, orange roses in a vase, and several wooden chairs. The table is set with plates and glasses. The floor is made of light-colored wood.

**DINING SPACE**

Christine has given this section of the open-plan living area a relaxed feel by mixing Graham and Green wooden dining chairs with a marble-topped table from India Jane. The rug, from Habitat, helps to zone the dining space

**LIVING AREA**

An oversized clock from Antiquities in nearby Arundel fills the space above the fireplace perfectly, while accessories in bold colour accents, such as the purple rug from Habitat, add a modern touch to this country home

**KITCHEN**

The warm honey tones of the oak floor and ceiling beams are echoed in the units. For a similar look, try the Berkeley kitchen from Schreiber at Homebase



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**A**t a time in their lives when most people consider downsizing, Christine Inwood and her partner Graham Bryant did exactly the opposite. The couple, who were about to retire, swapped a cosy Victorian cottage for a barn conversion with spacious rooms and soaring ceilings. 'Well, we couldn't have bought a house much smaller than the one we had,' says Christine. 'Our cottage had two bedrooms and everything was tiny.'

After 23 years in the same house they were ready for a change, and the converted barn is certainly that. Twice the size of their previous home and thought to be around 200 years old, the building has a spacious open-plan living, kitchen and dining area. It was converted in 2009 by a developer who used original materials to retain the building's authenticity wherever possible.

'The bare bones were wonderful,' says Christine, who was impressed with all aspects of the developer's work. 'He installed double-glazed oak-framed windows so the house stays warm in the winter, and fitted the kitchen, main bathroom and both ensuites beautifully, but it was still a blank canvas and I knew we needed to upsize our furniture and accessories to match the scale of the rooms.'

Determined to get the interior just right, Christine and Graham cashed in an endowment policy to enable them to invest in new furniture. 'We felt there was no point buying this wonderful space if we didn't furnish it properly,' says Christine. The couple's eclectic collection of antiques and retro and modern

pieces looks striking against a neutral backdrop of white walls and wood and stone floors. But there are touches of colour everywhere. 'I saw a feature in an interiors magazine in which a couple had used lots of vivid pink in their home,' says Christine. 'They had two startling-pink sofas, but I knew Graham wouldn't go for that so I stuck mainly to neutral colours for the big pieces of furniture and then had fun with bright cushions and pictures.'

To stop the open-plan living area from feeling too cavernous, Christine zoned the different areas with large colourful rugs. She also used oversized accessories, including an enormous wall clock over the fire, to work with the barn's scale, and then added table and floor lamps to create intimate pools of light.

While Christine worked her magic on the interior, Graham got to work on the outside. 'He had a vision of exactly what he wanted in the gardens and for the patio and deck at the back of the house,' she says.

A horticulturist by training, he also knew just which types of plants would tolerate the arid conditions and stony soil. Graham mapped out a garden bordered with lavender and climbing roses at the front, with new stone paths leading to both the front and side doors.

The deck along the back of the house is now a favourite suntrap, while a coastal-themed garden to one side of the barn features plants anchored in shingle and meadow grasses that catch the fresh summer breezes that waft in from the South Downs.

'We're surrounded by fields and that was one of the things we first loved about this house,' says Christine. 'On a sunny day you feel as if you're in France.' **HB**

#### MAIN BATHROOM

All the bathrooms were put in by the developer who converted the barn, so Christine has personalised each one with a few decorative touches. 'I painted this basin unit in Farrow & Ball's Stone Blue because it reminded me of a Moroccan holiday,' she says

#### GUEST ROOM

Simple wooden furniture keeps the scheme classic, though Christine has also included more contemporary features, including a mirrored Ikea wardrobe by to the bed



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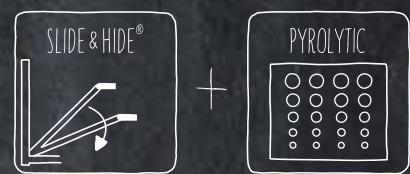
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# Simply PARED BACK

An understated decorating scheme allows period features to shine through in this Victorian terrace

WORDS CAROLINE EDNIE PHOTOGRAPHY NIGEL RIGDEN

## HOME PROFILE

**WHO LIVES HERE** Emily Curthoys, 43, an asset development manager in the oil and gas industry, and her husband Andrew, 37, a software developer

**THE PROPERTY** A three-bedroom Victorian terrace in Ferryhill, Aberdeen

**PRICE** £365,000

**MONEY SPENT** £80,000

**WHAT IT'S WORTH NOW**  
£500,000

### KITCHEN

White units from Ashley Ann are simple and modern, creating a beautifully understated scheme. The black pendant and wall light are from Original BTC





#### EXTERIOR

The Victorian house is part of a terrace. When Emily and Andrew bought it, it was decorated in 1970s style



#### COAT AREA

Old and new sit well together thanks to the neutral scheme. The radiator is from Paladin Radiators



#### HALL

A painting provides a single shot of colour, while the Victorian balustrade is the star in this elegant space



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'The biggest part of the transformation was stripping back everything from floor to ceiling to take all the 1970s features away,' SAYS EMILY



#### DINING SPACE

Emily and Andrew discovered the flagstone floor hidden under layers of laminate flooring



## LIVING ROOM

The Fly chair from Boconcept and the old Habitat couch echo the colour in the original fireplace. The photos are by Mark Oatney

**O**n buying their first home as a married couple Emily and Andrew Curthoys were faced with a seemingly straightforward renovation project. As there were no major structural, electrical or plumbing issues to deal with, 'the biggest part of the transformation was stripping everything from floor to ceiling to remove the 1970s features. What was left was really beautiful,' explains Emily.

Renovating the Victorian terrace in Aberdeen was still laborious though, as it involved peeling away layer upon layer of decor – from carpets and curtains to woodchip and pine-lined walls and ceilings, as well as laminate and linoleum floors and an avocado bathroom suite complete with bidet.

The couple also decided to make some structural changes. 'We were hoping to take down a wall between the dining and living room but this was rejected by the planning department as the house is listed,' says Emily. 'In hindsight we're not unhappy with that decision as we now like having separate dining and living areas.' One change that was approved, the removal of a non-load-bearing wall between the kitchen and dining room, was achieved with help from a local architect.

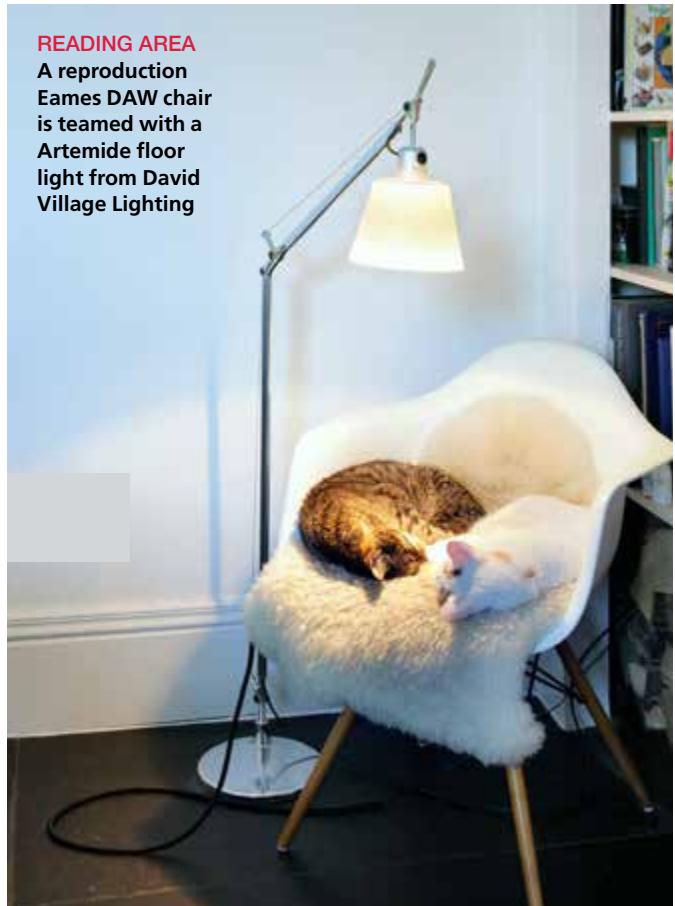
From the start of the project, the intention was to uncover and repair as many original elements as possible. Features such as a striking ceiling rose in the living room were restored and skirtings and cornices were 3D laser scanned so exact copies could be produced to be used in areas where the originals had been lost.

Along the way there were also one or two welcome discoveries. 'We had been told that concrete lay beneath the laminate flooring in the dining area, so when we pulled up the floor it was a big surprise to find the original flagstones,' says Emily. 'Having stripped back the fireplaces and replaced the hearths, we realised just how expensive slate is.'

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## READING AREA

A reproduction Eames DAW chair is teamed with a Artemide floor light from David Village Lighting



**CHARACTER PIECES**

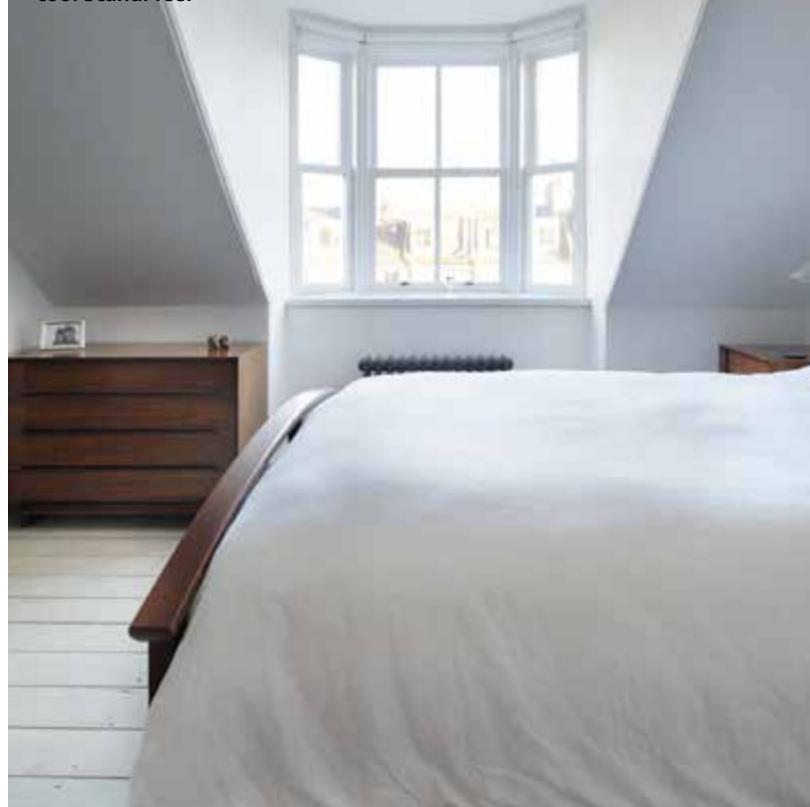
In one corner of the main bedroom is a rug from Nepal and a chest of drawers from Vietnam. The light is a Louis Poulsen

**BATHROOM**

Another piece from Emily and Andrew's travels – a chair from Peru – brings the neutral scheme to life

**MAIN BEDROOM**

The Victorian pine floorboards were finished with white-tint oil from Osmo for a cool Scandi feel



and how much of a saving we'd made by finding the flagstones.'

The house features a limited range of materials throughout, suiting Emily and Andrew's simple Scandinavian taste in interiors. As well as the flagstone flooring in the dining area, now repaired and sealed, there are other original floors and stairs, which have been sanded and oiled with a white oil stain. 'When we lived in Copenhagen we had raw pine floors that had to be cleaned weekly using Lye soap. We wanted the same look with lower maintenance,' says Emily.

Everything added to the interiors has a pared-back simplicity that allows the original features to shine through, from the glossy white handleless kitchen units that blend into the background, to the mid-century wooden furniture that adds warmth to the mainly all-white scheme. A few hits of colour, including the pink on the kitchen chair that dates back to Andrew's childhood, add character, as do the original features.

Emily and Andrew admit the renovation wasn't as straightforward as they had imagined. 'Our inexperience in dealing with builders was a big challenge,' says Emily. 'Luckily during the building work we were able to be there twice a day, although the project did still go over schedule. Work started in May 2014 and was supposed to take eight weeks. We built in four additional weeks, but when we left our rental accommodation 12 weeks into the build it was still nowhere near finished.' The couple had to move into a hotel at first. 'In the end we took on certain jobs that the contractors were supposed to do,' says Emily. 'It was a stressful journey at times, but nevertheless a very rewarding one – in retrospect!' **HB**

● Find out more about the couple's architects, **Brown + Brown Architects, Aberdeenshire, at [brownandbrownarchitects.com](http://brownandbrownarchitects.com) or call them on 01464 861567**

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE **WHERE TO BUY** PAGE



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*Julia*

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# BRICKS + MONEY

Stay up to date with the latest property and financial news

## RENOVATE! CELEBRATE!

Do you dream of rescuing an old property? Follow our guide to a successful renovation job

### \* Finding a property

Tracking down the perfect renovation project can be frustrating. Start by registering with local estate agents and sign up for alerts from property portals such as rightmove.co.uk, allagents.co.uk and trovit.co.uk. Cast your net wider though. ‘Auctions can be a good alternative,’ says Bobby Hall, partner at The Buying Solution ([thebuyingsolution.co.uk](http://thebuyingsolution.co.uk)).

‘Make sure you’ve carried out due diligence beforehand by having a survey – you don’t want to touch a property that isn’t structurally sound – and contacting a quantity surveyor to establish costs of renovation. It’s also worth getting in touch with local architects and quantity surveyors for leads on possible properties, and schools or churches often sell properties, as do some of the larger country estates, so contact them directly.’

### \* Financing the job

‘Securing funding for a period renovation is dependent on whether the property is habitable or uninhabitable,’ says Rachel Pyne, group sales director at self-build and renovation experts BuildStore ([buildstore.co.uk](http://buildstore.co.uk)). ‘Most lenders will offer 80-95 per cent of the value of a habitable property but may retain some money until essential repairs have been done. With an uninhabitable period property, you’ll need to consider a specialist lender that will offer a choice of either arrears or advance ‘Accelerator’ stage payments throughout the build project.’

### \* What about hidden costs?

‘You have to pay VAT at 20 per cent on labour and materials, with two exceptions,’ says David Snell, spokesperson for the Homebuilding and Renovation Shows. ‘If the house has been unoccupied for more than 10 years, it’s treated as a conversion and VAT is recoverable.

If it’s been empty for more than two years, a VAT-registered subcontractor can charge a reduced rate of five per cent



VAT. As a private individual you’d still be liable for VAT at the full rate on materials. It might be better to let your builder buy the materials and include them in their contract.’ Renovation on a listed building isn’t eligible for VAT relief.

### \* Applying for planning permission

If your property is listed or in a conservation area there will be limits on what you can do externally and perhaps internally. ‘Check the deeds and online register to find out if it’s listed,’ says Alex Gosling, CEO of online estate agents housesimple.co.uk. ‘If it is, then you’ll have to apply for “consent to renovate”.’ This may cover things like external paint colours, installing a satellite dish, inserting a dormer window and alterations to access and internal layout.

For properties in a conservation area, check the limitations with the local council planning officer, and bear in mind that even trees may be protected.

### \* Where to start

Deciding what to keep and what to remove is individual to each project. ‘This depends on what condition features are in and whether they’re “in keeping” with the period of the property, but also practical for today,’ says property expert Kate Faulkner of propertychecklists.co.uk. As a general rule, don’t discard anything that would cost serious money to replace. Use eBay and the online salvage yard directory salvo.co.uk to check prices. Refer to specialist organisations such as victoriansociety.org.uk and georgiangroup.org.uk for advice on recreating an authentic look.

‘Finding a good builder is key to a stress-free renovation,’ believes Alex Gosling. ‘It’s worth using someone who has some experience of renovating period properties, as they’ll have knowledge about the original materials, architectural details and construction methods.’ The Federation of Master Builders’ Find a Builder service at fmb.org.uk is a useful starting point.

## TWITTER TALK

Richard Lloyd, executive director of Which?, on getting the best deal while using your mobile abroad

### @HB: How can I save money on calls when I’m abroad?

@RichardJLloyd: Decide if they’re vital, as texts are cheaper. Depending on your phone, you could make a call over a Wi-Fi network via an app

### @HB: How are ‘wireless’ and ‘data roaming’ different?

@RichardJLloyd: Wireless can be free in hotels etc so you can surf the net, but data roaming can incur charges and be expensive

### @HB: What’s the cheapest way to send texts while I’m away?

@RichardJLloyd: Get an app that allows you to text over Wi-Fi. If you don’t have Wi-Fi, ask your provider what it charges to send texts

### @HB: What’s the benefit of an international SIM card?

@RichardJLloyd: International SIMs can be a cheaper rate or you can buy a local SIM. Your handset must be unlocked and you’ll be on a different number

### @HB: Is it worth buying an international ‘bundle’ or ‘bolt-on’ from my provider?

@RichardJLloyd: Depends on your usage. Check with your provider as some offer good deals when using your phone abroad

### @HB: What if I come back and my bill is higher than I expected?

@RichardJLloyd: If you feel you’ve been overcharged, check out #consumerrights at which.co.uk

### @HB: What can I do if my phone is stolen while abroad?

@RichardJLloyd: Report it ASAP. You may be liable for calls made before you do, but the cost of calls made within the first 24 hours may be capped at £100

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## NATURAL selection

GRASMERE, LAKE DISTRICT, CUMBRIA

£575,000



Nestled in the Lake District National Park, this three-bed cottage has amazing panoramic views, a triple-aspect living room, kitchen/diner, conservatory and two bathrooms. There's a manageable garden and it's a short walk to the centre of Grasmere.

**Matthews Benjamin,**  
015394 32220

EMERY DOWN, NEARLYNDHURST, HAMPSHIRE

£369,950



In the New Forest, this thatched cottage has three bedrooms, two with feature fireplaces, plus a study/fourth bedroom and a dual-aspect living room. The coast and the market town of Lymington, with its marina and yacht club, are 10 miles away.

**John D Wood & Co,**  
01590 677233

BALK, NEAR THIRSK, NORTH YORKSHIRE

£495,000



Situated on the edge of the North York Moors National Park, this Georgian village house has six bedrooms and is perfect for a family. There's a kitchen/breakfast room with an Aga, plus a dining room, family room, conservatory and study.

**Strutt & Parker,**  
01423 561274

LUXBOROUGH, NEAR WATCHET, SOMERSET

£650,000



This luxury barn conversion in the Exmoor National Park has wonderful views through floor-to-ceiling windows in the open-plan living space. There are five bedrooms and three bathrooms, beamed ceilings and a woodburning stove.

**Fine & Country,**  
01643 700210

J-Lo's reported Big Apple home is not short of space



## PROPERTY gossip

What does a megastar singer like Jennifer Lopez demand from a New York penthouse? As well as six bathrooms, four terraces and a chef's kitchen for rustling up the latest celebrity diets, J-Lo's rumoured new \$22m penthouse apartment in the Whitman Building, where her neighbours include Chelsea Clinton, also has a putting green. Until now, her interest in golf hasn't been well-documented, but after working out in the on-site gym, she can brush up on her swing in the shadow of Madison Square Park. Whether she manages to improve her handicap or not, Jenny has certainly come a long way from the Block.



PROPERTY FINANCE SPECIALIST  
**Melanie Bien**  
Money expert and founder of Bien Media

### Tapping into the bank of mum and dad

Our daughter is keen to buy a house and we want to help. Should we give her money towards a deposit or take out a joint mortgage with her?

First-time buyers are turning to the bank of mum and dad for help with a deposit. The bigger the deposit, the cheaper the mortgage rate. For instance, if your daughter puts down 10 per cent, rates for a two-year fix could be around 3.09 per cent, but with a 15 per cent deposit, the rate can drop to 2.29 per cent\*. Lenders prefer gifts of a deposit to a loan. If it is a loan, the lender will take into account the repayments when deciding how much your daughter can borrow, so she'll get a smaller mortgage.

Another option is to buy a property with your daughter. Your income would be taken into account as well as hers so she should be able to borrow more, assuming you don't have huge commitments such as a large mortgage. You would go on the mortgage as a joint applicant but not on the deeds so there should be no capital gains tax liability on the sale of the property.

There is also a Help to Buy ISA, available from the autumn. If your daughter saves up to £200 a month, the Government will add £50. You could put the money in on your daughter's behalf and if she saves the full amount will get a bonus of £3,000 towards buying a home, but it will take some time to build up a deposit.



## BE INSPIRED AT HARVEYS

Hetton chair in Victoria Linen, from £200 each,  
shown with the Bryony large sideboard, from £699.

[harveysfurniture.co.uk](http://harveysfurniture.co.uk)

**Harveys**  
the furniture store

# Beneath THE TREES

CREATE AN INVITING SPACE YOU'LL  
ENJOY FROM DAWN TO DUSK

'Add a dash of vintage romance to your garden. This season's colour palette of pastels works well when teamed with charcoal tones.'

STEVEN ROWE,  
TESCO





1



2



3

### (Left) SECRET GARDEN

Hang outdoor lights from the trees above your table to create a party atmosphere. You could also place paper bag lanterns around the table, lit by glowing battery-operated tealights. **Find similar lanterns at notonthehighstreet.com**

### 1 IN BLOOM

Cluster a pretty collection of vintage-style coloured glassware on your table. The sun will reflect off it to make delicate patterns on the dining table. A vase filled with garden flowers gives a lovely summery feel. **L-r: Glass bottle, £7.99; metal tealight holders, £2.99 each; blue and pink candles in glasses, £4.99 each; glass clear and blue**

**bottles, £3.99 each; vase, £7.99; tumbler, £3.99; candlestick, £3.99; glass jug, £14.99; wire basket, £9.99; all H&M**

### 2 LOUNGE LIVING

Relax in comfort on this eucalyptus wood lounger that comes with a padded cushion and a pull-out table. **Dahlia lounger, £259; Fluro Bird cushion, £29.50; Rabbit Objet, £17.50; all Marks & Spencer**

### 3 PITCH PERFECT

Camping doesn't have to be restricted to trips away. Put a tent in the garden for the kids to play in and the adults to take respite from the heat. **Wiltshire tent, £595, Liberty**

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### AS DUSK FALLS

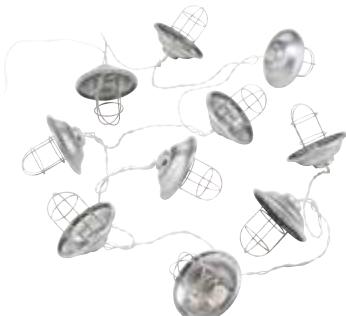
Add charm with floral prints and pastel shades



(From top) Pretty and practical Folksy **melamine bowl** in coral, £4.50. **Berry Red**. Ideal for Pimm's, the **high ball tumbler**, £3.50, is from Marks & Spencer. The Peru **garden bench**, £79.99, Homebase, is made from solid eucalyptus wood. Update a garden chair with the Painted Daisy **seat cushion**, £18, Cath Kidston

## AT DAYBREAK

Mix and match coastal motifs in classic blue and white



(From top) Inject a sense of drama with the From The Deep **plate**, £14, Anthropologie. Add a twinkle with coastal-themed **fairy lights**. Fisherman lanterns, £25, Marks & Spencer. The Reverie wood **rocking bench** would look great on a porch, £440, Out There Interiors. Ideal for parties, blue stripe **napkin**, £2 for 20, Sainsbury's



2



3

### (Right) SEASCAPE INSPIRATION

Don't be afraid to mix patterns in your dining table setting – just keep to a limited colour palette and introduce wooden elements for texture. For a reclaimed wood trestle table, try Homebarn. Chambray runner, £24; Anchor stripe large bowl (with squares), £18; Anchor stripe platter (with bread), £16; Thrift porcelain dinnerware, from £6; fish melamine dinner plate, £6; fish side plate, £5; fish cereal bowl, £5; ombre vases, from £20; Anchor carafe, £20; Anchor glasses, £25 for four; Anchor stripe jug, £16; napkins, £16 for four; napkin rings, £12 for four; chair pads, £15 each; shell cushion, £20; lanterns, from £20 each; all Linea Maritime at House of Fraser

### 1 FINE DINING

Melamine tableware now looks like the real thing. **Plates and bowls from £3.50; Kyoto cutlery set, £29.50; striped ribbed runner, £15; salt and pepper set, £29.50;** all Marks & Spencer

### 2 ALL MAPPED OUT

Dream of far-flung travel under this atlas design bedlinen. **Pillowcase, £6.99; duvet set, from £29.99; blanket, £24.99;** all H&M

### 3 BEACHSIDE

Outdoor furniture in a timeless style is a good investment. Just update each year with new cushions. **Bilbao chair, £100, John Lewis**

CONTINUED OVER NEXT PAGE

'Take inspiration from the coast. Team weathered wood and glazed platters with ink-washed linens and smart striped melamine.'

SUE ROBERTS,  
HOUSE OF FRASER

## AFTER MIDDAY

Cool down with shades of green and natural textures



(From top) Woven Kyoto bamboo lantern, £35, Habitat. The Nigella Lawson **cake and cheese dome**, £60, Unique and Unity is perfect to display and protect food. Pack these picnic **baskets** with delicious goodies, £75 for two, Out There Interiors. The Palm Springs metal **chair** is elegant and stackable, £250, Raj Tent Club



### (Right) TRANQUIL SCENE

Choose a secluded spot and keep the look relaxed with crumpled linen and mismatched china. **Angso outdoor table**, £110; **Angso chairs**, £50 each; **Tasinge chair cushions**, £12 each; **Ursula throw**, £20; all **Ikea**

### 1 SOOTHING SANCTUARY

Create shade by clipping white voile fabric to the branches of a tree at different heights. **Kain bamboo daybed**, £255; **mattress**, £99; **linen and lanterns**, from **a selection**; all **Broste**

### 2 NATURE TABLE

For a dinner party, personalise each place setting with a small potted plant with a plant label written with each guest's name.

**Eden Mossed mini terracotta pots**, £4 each, **Rowen & Wren**. **Willow and Stone** sell **blackboard plant labels**, £5.50 for 10

### 3 LEAD THE WAY

Dot lanterns down your path to highlight the route to the table. Fill the lanterns with Citronella tealights to keep the bugs away. Homebase sells packs of 25 for £2.99. **Kamla lanterns**, from £9.95 for two, **Nkuku**

### 4 WOOD GRAIN

Reclaimed wood panels are an eco option. Team with wooden furniture and recycled glass for a rustic effect. **Try salvo.co.uk to find a salvage yard for wood**. **Bench**, £200; **dining table**, £499; **dining chairs**, £125; all **Croft collection**, **John Lewis**



A white outdoor dining set consisting of a table and four chairs is positioned under a large, leafy apple tree. The table is covered with a light-colored cloth and holds various items for a meal, including plates, glasses, and a small potted plant. The chairs have striped cushions. The scene is set in a garden with dense greenery and fallen apples on the ground.

'Outdoor sofas, chairs and cushions create a chic and comfy look surrounded by a few choice plants.'

CLOTILDE PASSALACQUA,  
IKEA UK

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# MOODBOARD MASTERCLASS

CREATE GORGEOUS SUMMER SCHEMES INSIDE AND OUT  
USING OUR GUIDE TO DECORATING WITH MELLOW YELLOWS





Use a mix of modern sculptural furniture and sleek ceramic tableware to create a chic space to sit, eat and soak up the summer sun. Bring all the white to life – and add extra interest – with elements of delicate yellow



### So sexy

This hourglass-shaped stool is by designer Philippe Starck.

**Kartell Prince AHA stool in Light Yellow, £60, Amara**

**Pitcher perfect**  
Serve your lemonade in this beautiful piece.  
**Large glass water jug, £35, Holly's House**



### Window dressing

Shutters are a chic choice. **Classic poplar wood shutters in custom paint colour, £178 a sq metre, California Shutters**



### Work of art

The hand-dipped coloured glaze is simply striking.

**Estrella large yellow and cream bowl, £18, Habitat**

### Super sleek

Include lots of streamlined designs to keep the look modern. **White ribbed ceramic vase, £49.99, HomeSense**



### Standout seat

It comes in white, too.

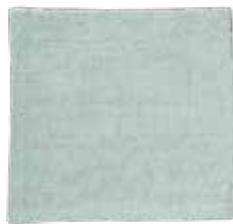
**Don Chadwick Spark side chair in Citron, £210, The Conran Shop**



### Round table

You get designer looks on a budget with this brilliant lacquered table.

**Lance four-seater white dining table, £150, Habitat**



### Natural touch

Soften the look with some simple linen napkins in subtle shades.

**Coloured plain napkins in Sea Green, Putty and Parma Grey, £9 each, Volga Linen**



### Daisy chain

Flowers are a must for a summery scheme. **Wanderer floral print teacup, £7, Debenhams**

CONTINUED OVER PAGE



## ENHANCING STUNNING PERIOD FEATURES



If you have a character property with original features that you want to make the most of, then trust Sharps to work with you to create your dream room. We'll help you choose beautiful, bespoke fitted wardrobes, in a style such as Sonata, to give you the perfect period look. We tailor our innovative storage solutions to your exact needs, giving you a personalised place for everything.



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at your nearest showroom  
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**sharps**  
created with you

**Bright bedroom** Pick a deep lemon yellow to get a mid-century modern look that's contemporary and uplifting. Team with sophisticated shades of grey and striking geometric designs



**From top to bottom:** Grey and yellow sheet vinyl flooring, £56 a sq metre, both The Colour Flooring Company. Rukin black and white pillowcase, £7, Habitat. Haywood 220051 fabric; Perpetua fabric 220055; both £41 a metre, Sanderson. Pompeian 66-3018 wallpaper, £72 a roll, Cole & Son. Buttons, from a selection, Cloth House. Picnic mug, £10, Anthropologie. Tile, from a selection, Burlington Stone. Rya fabric 230246, £43 a metre, Sanderson. Candles, £2.70 each, Graham and Green. Knobs, from £6 each, Anthropologie. Frame, £12, John Lewis. Queens Key 98-5018 wallpaper (in frame), £85 a roll, Cole & Son. Chunky knit cushion, £25, Seedheads wallpaper, £22 a roll; both John Lewis. Wrappings wallpaper 210205, £41 for a 10m roll, Sanderson. Babouche Estate emulsion £38 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball. Sophistication metallic emulsion, £18.49 for 2.5L, Crown

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

# Urban regeneration

Introducing the all-new electric AGA City60, a 2-oven cast iron AGA, the same size as a conventional cooker. It uses radiant heat which is gentler on food, successfully locking in both moisture and flavour as it cooks.



To welcome the AGA City60 to your neighbourhood visit [agaliving.com](http://agaliving.com) or call 0845 481 0062.



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£145



WITHIN  
[WITHINHOME.COM](http://WITHINHOME.COM)

Chiltern **bedstead**, £799;  
Retro Print double **duvet**  
**set**, £29; Spot **table**,  
£175; Tube **pendant**,  
£255; Holm **rug**, from  
£180; all John Lewis



Mid-century design is all about pared-back elegance – perfect for a relaxed summery scheme. Start with a cool dove grey for the walls and floor, and reserve the bright lemon-yellow accents for the bedding and one or two key accessories. Simply styled oak furniture completes the look

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

# Quicky



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[www.crownpaint.co.uk](http://www.crownpaint.co.uk)



### Perfectly arranged

There's a rail for your clothes and shelves for shoes.

**Bamboo clothes rail, £159,**  
Tine K Home at Idyll Home



### Cool cushion

Yellow piping, shades of grey, a geometric design – it ticks all the boxes for a fresh and fabulous mid-century modern vibe. **Albers cushion, £85,** Niki Jones at Rockett St George



### Light fantastic

Not only does it have a chic streamlined look, but it's also made from recycled glass.

**Bubble hanging lamp, £95,**  
Out There Interiors



### Home comforts

You can keep this knitted cotton blanket out all year round.

**Moss stitch charcoal grey throw, £80,** Luma

### Sleep tight

This lacquered oak bed has 1950s-style detailing that will stand the test of time. **Fleur double bed, £495,** Habitat



### Boldly go

Make storage beautiful so it can go on show. **Living by Christiane Lemieux fabric storage bags, from £20 each,** House of Fraser



### Good morning

The bright yellow will perk you up. **Loop espresso cup and saucer, £17.50,** Occa Home



### Mono magic

An aloe vera would look good in this planter.

**Five Strike planter, £25,** Berry Red

### Smart shape

Pop a yellow candle in here – the triangular base will catch the dripping wax.

**Gisela Graham metal candleholder, £12,** The Contemporary Home



### Brighten up

A stunner from award-winning light company Di Classe. **Arles white desk lamp, £96,** In-Spaces



# COLOUR confident

Industry experts explain how to use the colours of summer skies and seas



## ENDLESS SKIES

**Look up and be inspired by a universe of hues**

Suggested by the inky blue-violet San Francisco sky, Pacific Heights (above) makes you want to drink in clean air. Fantastic with whites, creams and red accents, it also looks great with vibrant throws and glows against the glint of copper and candlelight.

**IAN WEST ECOS  
ORGANIC PAINTS**



Pacific Heights matt emulsion, £41.63 for 5L, Ecos Organic Paints

Expansive and freeing, Sky Blue 103 is reminiscent of early morning summer skies – full of optimism and without the harshness of midday blues. Use in a palette of barely-there pinks, like Pink Slip or Milk Thistle, to bring a breath of fresh air.

**DAVID MOTTERSHEAD  
LITTLE GREENE**



Sky Blue 103, £37 for 2.5L, Absolute matt emulsion, Little Greene



## INTO THE DEEP

**Embrace the rich shades of high-summer blue**

Offering a muted take on the trend for neon accents, St Giles Blue (above) contains black pigment, making it versatile and ideal for rooms to unwind in. Team with bold colours such as Arsenic and Charlotte's Locks for a Mediterranean feel.

**JOSEPHINE RANCE  
FARROW & BALL**



St Giles Blue Estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball

Minsk looks good in south-facing rooms without losing its vibrancy, and brightens a north-facing space. Team with earthy shades, deep creams, beiges and pink blush hues to warm it up or, for a dramatic look, add dark blue accents.

**RISHI SUBATHAR  
EICÓ PAINTS**



Minsk Alterior matt, £34.50 for 2.5L, Eicó Paints

## HEAT IT UP, COOL IT DOWN

You can warm up shades of blue by using accents of hot reds, vibrant oranges, soft pinks and blush tones.

Alternatively, if you're trying to create a cool, classic blue palette, combine with whites, creams and pale greys.



## KEEP COOL

**Light, airy colours bring a clear-sky feeling all year**

If you long for the perfect sunny day or love time at the beach with wide, open skies, paint walls with Bonton (above). This soothing, uplifting shade looks great in bedrooms and bathrooms. Combine with taupe and mint for a modern look.

**REBECCA CRAIG  
SANDERSON**



Bonton matt emulsion, £41 for 2.5L, Sanderson

Friendly and soft, La Source Bleue adds lightness to a kitchen and always looks smart with whites or off-whites. Use it in a room with plenty of light because it's a positive colour. For a modern feeling and practical elegance, try a mid-sheen finish.

**SIMON MARCH COLOUR  
MAKES PEOPLE HAPPY**



La Source Bleue emulsion, £36 for 2.5L, Colour Makes People Happy

## SUMMER BREEZE

**Blow away the cobwebs with fresh, windswept tones**

Sea Urchin (on walls above) combines the tranquillity of green with a calm blue that never feels cold. A receding colour, blue makes a small room appear larger so I'd use it in a smaller bedroom or study where you need to think and dream.

**MARIANNE SHILLINGFORD  
DULUX**



MixLab Sea Urchin 4 matt emulsion, £24.49 for 2.5L, Dulux

The beautiful, breezy blue of A Day By The Sea brings carefree trips to the beach to mind. This versatile, easy-to-live-with shade works well with a coastal-inspired palette of driftwood browns, shell-like creams and marram grass greens.

**ROB WHITAKER  
FIRED EARTH**



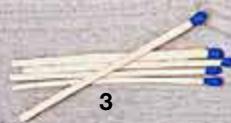
A Day By The Sea matt emulsion, £35.50 for 2.5L, Fired Earth

# PICNIC TIME!

Make the most of the summer sunshine with colourful and practical tableware that's ideal for alfresco entertaining



2



3



4



5



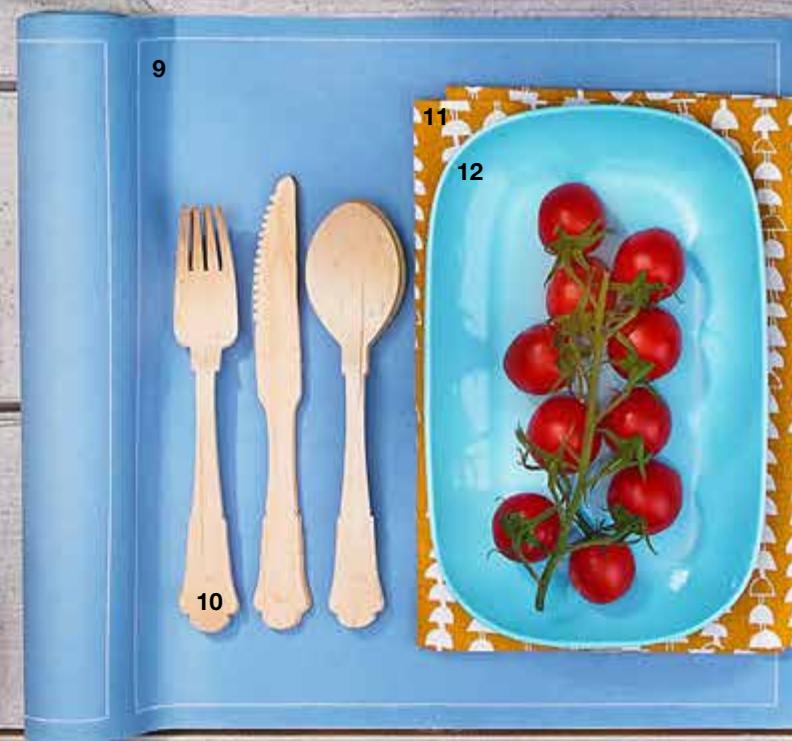
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10



11

12

£12.50 for 25, Divertimenti **10** Vintage wooden cutlery, from £2.40 for five, Pipii **11** Hopi napkin, £10, Etoile Home **12** Blue melamine platter, £3.99, Rice **13** Check blanket, £30, Cath Kidston **14** Spectrum Duo

**1** Small Bonne jam jar **T-light holders**, £4.95 each, Dotcomgiftshop **2** Summer Meadow paper napkins, £1.95 for 20, Dotcomgiftshop **3** Matches, stylist's own **4** Blue melamine plates, £7.80 each; floral **side plates**, £8.99

each; all Rice **5** Melamine tiffin **lunch box**, £46.99, Rice **6** Storm lantern, £29, Toast **7** Cottage garden **baskets**, £5.50 for three, Talking Tables **8** Bamboo **buffet forks**, £2.99 for 50, Pipii **9** Sky blue MyDrap **napkins**,



14

15

16



18



19

20

21



**digital radio**, £59.95, John Lewis **15** Powder pink **sunglasses**, £5.99, H&M **16** Natural seagrass Read **picnic basket**, £40, Habitat (containing plates and glasses from Rice; French table **water bottle**, £4.95, Dotcomgiftshop;

and Hopi **napkins**, £10, Etoile Home) **17** Bees wrap **sandwich wrap**, £8.95, The Wise House **18** Kraftpaper **box**, £3.50 for two, Pipii (similar **string** available at RE) **19** Speckled **salad bowl**, £12, Cath Kidston **20** Traditional olive wood

**salad set**, £10.95, Divertimenti **21** **Drinking jars** with carrier, £14.95, Dotcomgiftshop (with **paper straws**, £2.95 for 25, Pipii)

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE WHERE TO BUY PAGE

# SIEMENS



A dish is only as fine as its ingredients. It's a rule that equally applies to kitchen design. Introducing the iQ700 Built-in Appliance Range – designed to create a Siemens kitchen that will set the benchmark in coordinated design and intelligent technology. With front panels controlled by touch, that perfectly harmonise with one another so you

can arrange the appliances your way. And thanks to the intelligent combined heating technology, varioSpeed, you're free to live a life less ordinary and cook your way too. Prepare dishes with speed and save up to 50% of the cooking time by combining the iQ700 integrated microwave with more conventional cooking options.



# Effortless control. Seamless design.

The all new iQ700 built-in appliances. Designed to coordinate with your kitchen whilst time-saving features afford you more flexibility. For a life less ordinary.

[siemens-home.co.uk/iQ700-Oven](http://siemens-home.co.uk/iQ700-Oven)

Siemens. The future moving in.

# 6 STEPS TO... A FABULOUS ENTRANCE

Expert advice from interior designer and TV presenter Julia Kendell

## 1 THE FRONT DOOR

It may seem obvious, but a good quality front door can make a huge difference to the appearance of your house. If you're buying a new one, go for something in keeping with the property's age, particularly if you have a period home. If the existing door is sound, paint it in a colour that reflects the tone of the home. Using a strong shade can make a statement, though the current trend is for light, cool colours, particularly matt greys and chalky blues. New door hardware will give an update and is a worthwhile investment. Avoid period features on a modern property; instead use plain, good quality, contemporary hardware. Reclamation yards are great places to look for original period pieces.

## 2 LIGHTING UP

Well-designed lighting is subtle, highlighting architectural features and making the doorway feel safe. Position lights either centrally above the front door or on each side at the eyeline for symmetry. A small light illuminating the house number or name will make it easier for guests and deliveries to find you. If you're lighting the garden, make sure the fittings are concealed for a soft, understated look and position carefully to avoid glare through your windows and into neighbouring homes.

## 3 WINDOWS AND PORCHES

It's never worth skimping on windows as the wrong style



**Greet guests with a well-designed front door. This one is painted in Mister David 47, Little Greene Exterior Paints, from £18.75 for 1L**

or poor quality ones can have a negative impact on the value of the house. Where possible, renovate original windows in period properties, but if they're beyond repair, choose replacements that are as close to the original proportions and style as possible. Invest in double or triple glazing for heat retention and soundproofing. As an alternative to white, paint

timber frames in a washed-out grey/green/blue to create a softer overall look.

A porch can be very useful, especially in bad weather, but can quickly become a dumping ground if not planned carefully. The style and size should match the property so that it doesn't look like an obvious add-on. Build in storage to avoid an accumulation of clutter.

## 4 CREATE AN ENTRANCE

The path and drive, if you have one, should form the backdrop and not be so elaborate they become the main feature, detracting from the house itself. Unless you have an older property, avoid ornate herringbone and other small modern designs. Instead, go for more substantial and plainer finishes to suit the age and character of the house.

For example, smaller cottages suit old-stock brick paths or Portland stone for a more substantial look. Tessellated mosaic tiles are the perfect choice for Victorian and Edwardian properties. Modern homes tend to sit well against a backdrop of limestone or concrete paving. The lighter the finish, the larger the area will feel, and it will bounce more light through the windows.

## 5 GOOD STORAGE

Plan storage for the front of the house – whether for bicycles or bins – as you would for any other area. Bins are becoming larger and uglier, but can be disguised by neat timber stores or willow panels in a less obvious part of the front garden. Cycling is one of the fastest growing sports in the UK, and is a great way for the family to stay fit; the easier bikes are to get to, the more they'll be used. There are lots of lockable bike storage sheds that incorporate helmet and accessory shelves. They're also useful for storing scooters and prams so they don't clutter up the hallway or porch.

## 6 FINISHING TOUCHES

Neat greenery – such as a pair of standard bay or box-ball trees either side of a front door – looks welcoming. Choose artificial types if your doorway doesn't get much natural daylight or if you don't have the time to tend to real ones. Similarly, an artificial lawn is better than a rarely-cut, weed-infested natural option. Introduce colour with windowboxes; having two sets allows for spring/summer and autumn/winter planting for a change of look throughout the year. **HB**



Tetbury rivet planters, £82 for two; Welly™ doormat, £10; all Garden Trading

# CELEBRATE AMAZING TRANSFORMATIONS

From whole house revamps to clever room makeovers, House Beautiful pulls the dust sheets off inspiring home projects

The new extension is full of character and light thanks to the vaulted ceiling with roof lights and a wall of bi-fold doors from UK Bifold. Wood-effect vinyl WP412 Primo flooring was bought from Karndean



# PERFECTLY OPEN PLAN

After waiting more than a decade, one family took the plunge and remodelled the downstairs layout of their home to create a substantial and stylish kitchen and living space

WORDS STEPHANIE SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID GILES



## HOME PROFILE

### WHO LIVES HERE

Anita Edwards, 45, and her husband Simon, 51, who together run a stage set design business, and their sons Ryan, 22, and Jack, 16

### THE RENOVATION

A four-bedroom 1930s detached house in Hampton, southwest London. Part of the ground floor was

reconfigured and an extension was added to create a large, open-plan kitchen and living space. The initial budget was £100,000, but the final costs amounted to nearly £107,000, of which £73,000 was for building works. Bi-fold doors added £7,000

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

**The single row of Tewkesbury Stone units from Howdens blends into the background – ideal in an open-plan living space. Ikea's yellow Bernhard bar stools lift the neutral scheme**



**A** large garden and room to extend originally attracted Anita and Simon Edwards to their home in Hampton, southwest London, nearly 12 years ago. However, it wasn't until last year that they put their master plan of creating a large open-plan kitchen and living space into action. Over the years, the couple gradually improved the house and even extended their small galley kitchen slightly – a decision that was affected by the layout of the house.

'We have a living room at the front but one of the main problems was the second living room, which was at the back of the house next to the tiny kitchen. It was a very dark space as it only had one window looking out onto the garden, so our first kitchen extension was small as we didn't want it to block that window,' explains Anita.

In 2009 there followed a side extension to provide an office, utility area and downstairs shower room, but the main issue of needing a bigger kitchen still hadn't been addressed. 'As the boys got older, they started to bring friends over and we wanted a much more open-plan feel with different zones for eating, relaxing and cooking. Our dated kitchen just wasn't up to scratch, so last year we finally decided to get expert help to tackle the problem.'

Having consulted three architects, Anita and Simon appointed one who was also a structural engineer and the agreed solution was to take out three internal walls around the second living room and extend across the back of the house to create one large space.

'Luckily we were able to get this work done under permitted development because we were only extending out another 3.5 metres on top of the 2.5 metres we had built out previously.'



**Two chairs bought on eBay create a seating area. The Arc lamp and Sylvester side table are from Graham and Green**



Anita has used sofas to separate the sitting area from the kitchen/dining space. The chimney breast has been painted to match the island unit and a butterfly picture from Rockett St George sits on the mantelpiece

explains Anita. 'I was set on having a vaulted ceiling and bi-fold doors across the back to bring the garden in.'

Anita and Simon got several quotes for the building work, and went with a recommended local builder who was due to start in September 2014 but suddenly got a cancellation and it was all systems go in July with the work completed in November.

'I'd definitely recommend researching what you want well in advance of the building work beginning as there are so many decisions to be made with little notice,' says Anita. 'Having a penalty clause where money is taken off if the work overruns is a good idea too.' So what was the best decision the couple made? 'I'm really happy that we added two more roof lights part way through the build,' says Anita. 'It's allowed in even more light.' **HB**

## WHAT IT COST

|                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Building works ..... | £73,000         |
| Kitchen units .....  | £12,500         |
| Worktops.....        | £3,500          |
| Appliances.....      | £7,439          |
| Flooring .....       | £1,715          |
| Bi-fold doors .....  | £7,000          |
| Furniture.....       | £1,415          |
| Paint .....          | £204            |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>£106,773</b> |



## ZONE an open-plan space

\* A large island unit, which includes an induction hob and plenty of storage, defines the cooking and eating space. 'Initially we were planning to have a dining table and chairs as well,' says Anita, 'but we couldn't find anything we liked and were worried it would look a bit cramped. You can get a lot of people around the island and it makes for a much more relaxed, informal atmosphere.'

\* Anita and Simon decided to put all the appliances and the base and wall units on one side of the island to keep the kitchen part of the open-plan room contained. Clever additions such as a pull-out larder make it an efficient space.

\* On the other side of the island, Anita decided to create a small seating area with two chairs, a small table and a lamp for reading. 'This extra little spot actually gets used a lot as it looks out on to the garden and the chairs are so comfortable,' says Anita. 'Simon and I often end up here for weekend breakfast with coffee and the papers. It's great to have so many options.'

\* The main living area at the other end of the room is also defined by furniture. Two sofas positioned at right angles create a cosy separate space within the large open-plan area.

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE **WHERE TO BUY PAGE**

# Sleep in a beautiful bed

Enjoy comfort and style in one of House Beautiful's gorgeous designs at DFS



Pure elegance with this Chesterfield-inspired Benedict bed, available in eight colours, £599 for the double

The sumptuous upholstered range of bed frames at DFS offers affordable luxury and a blissful night's sleep. Three exclusive designs, Benedict (shown here), Jules and Vivien are the newest additions to the House Beautiful collection.

There are three distinctive options to choose from: Benedict's button-back look, the quilted Jules and Vivien's sleek, smooth finish.

Each comes in a soft, velvet-look fabric in a choice of eight colours in single, double, king and super king sizes. For additional impact, you can order optional side extensions.

To see all three designs, visit [dfs.co.uk](http://dfs.co.uk) or [housebeautiful.co.uk](http://housebeautiful.co.uk)

**ABOVE** Benedict bed in Boston Blue, £599 for 4ft 6in (£399 for 3ft, £699 for 5ft and £899 for 6ft), DFS. **On back ledge:** Palm, Deux and Heart unframed prints, £45 each; Limited edition Laughter Is The Best Medicine print, £25; all Rockett St George. Ribba frames in Black, from £3.50; Gestalta artist's dummy, £6; all Ikea. Coralia small walnut side table, £150, Habitat. **Desk lamps:** £210 each, Rockett St George. Hemnes chest of drawers, £115, Ikea. **On chest of drawers:** Croft vase, £75, John Lewis. Garda ceramic vase, £10, Habitat. Black fine wood frame, £35, The White Company. **On bed:** Classic white linen pillowcases, from £30; duvet cover, £170 for a double; all The Linen Works. Savoy bedlinen:

**RIGHT** Benedict, £695, with folding side sections to cocoon you in luxury



Oxford pillowcase, from £25; flat sheet, from £62; all The White Company. Madeleine Jude Dukagang lambswool throw, £99, Absolute Abode. Cairo print cushion, £29.95, Graham and

Green. Eames RAR chair, £436, The Conran Shop. **On chair:** Bingham blanket in Silver Grey, £125, The White Company. Parisian Blue linen throw, £115, The Linen Works

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE WHERE TO BUY PAGE

# HB PROJECT BATHROOM

PLANNING \* PRODUCTS \* TRENDS \* ESSENTIALS

- 100** Plan to perfection
- 104** Ultimate guide to bathroom fittings
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- 122** Where to buy



PHOTOGRAPH MARK SCOTT

# PLAN TO PERFECTION

Consider design, layout and storage to make the most of your space

One of the best ways to make your home feel more luxurious is to improve the bathroom or showering space. Even if it's not possible to add a new room, some clever planning and the latest inventive solutions can transform the existing space, making it less of a squeeze and providing showstopping looks.

## Think about layout

Start by making a floorplan sketch of the room, noting the length of each wall, the position of the door, which side it opens on and any windows. Then you can make a scale plan on squared paper, cutting out paper shapes to represent the fittings. There are also online 3D planners you can use; find one at ideal-standard.co.uk.

Rerouting the hot and cold water supplies to where they are needed shouldn't be problematic, but the waste pipe from the WC needs a short, straight run to an outside wall to join the soil stack. If that's not possible, fitting a macerator and pump allows a small bore pipe to be used, so you have more flexibility in positioning the WC.

Don't forget to allow enough clearance around bathroom fittings so you can move around easily. As a rough guide, you need 70cm in front of a WC and basin and 100cm in front of a bath. If your ideas aren't working, it's worth thinking outside the box and investigating whether moving a wall or window or simply changing the way a door hangs could free up space.

## Ensuites and loft bathrooms

An ensuite will take the pressure off a family bathroom and, if carefully planned, it need not take up much space. The usual and easiest way to get one is to partition off part of the bedroom with a stud wall, perhaps replacing a row of fitted wardrobes, but you could also 'borrow' from an adjoining bedroom. Save on the space taken up by the swing of a door by choosing a sliding version or simply going without one.

When converting a loft, it makes sense to plan in a bathroom or shower room. Bear in mind that sloping ceilings will affect where the fittings can go; the shower will have to fit into the highest part of the slope, whereas the foot end of a bath can be slid into eaves space. 'If you're fitting a wet room in a loft, I'd advise you to look for a specialist loft conversion company as the tanking (waterproofing) process can be problematic, especially when a new loft is settling in,' says Rob Wood, director at Simply Loft.

## Downstairs shower room

Space downstairs can also be reconfigured to take a shower room. Consider carving out a new room from the kitchen or a utility area, or investigate using the space under the stairs for a loo. If you're building a new bathroom, make sure you get building regulations approval for changes to drainage, electrics and ventilation.



## Waterproofing a wet room

\* A wet room is a shower room without an enclosure or shower tray. The water splashes directly onto the walls and floor, so all the surfaces in the room must be made waterproof. It's worth considering fitting a simple shower screen to prevent the loo, basin and entire floor getting wet.

\* Before tiling, walls are fitted with waterproof tile backing boards or 'tanked' with a waterproof membrane. Instead of having the usual shower tray, the floor of a wet room is generally tiled for a seamless look but the floor of the shower area is also shaped with a slight fall so water will flow into the waste trap set into the floor.

\* If the floor is concrete, space for the waste trap must be chased out, then a former (a concealed tray) is fitted before the floor is screeded, waterproofed and tiled. For a timber 'suspended' floor, the floorboards in the shower area should be replaced by marine ply for absolute rigidity before the concealed shower tray is fitted.

\* Underfloor heating consisting of a mesh of electrically heated wires can be included below the tiles to keep the room warm underfoot.

**CONTINUED OVER NEXT PAGE**

This bespoke shower enclosure slots effortlessly into a small space. Made-to-measure screens, £1,900 including fitting; HSK Renodeco shower panel in Limestone, from £295 for a 900mm x 2,550mm panel; all Frontline Bathrooms



## Design values

There's no reason a small space can't be big on design. Be inspired by the latest wall-hung fittings, introduce luxe finishes for walls and floors, and add sparkle with chrome and glass. Choosing a statement piece of furniture or a bold basin will help create a focal point for your new theme. When refitting an existing bathroom, there isn't always room to move fittings, but space-saving compact versions can make all the difference. Also consider underfloor heating instead of a radiator to free up more space.

## Beautiful baths

If you love a good soak, don't be denied this pleasure because your room is too small for a bath - there are several models at a compact 1,500mm x 700mm, while the Gem from Bathroom Heaven comes in lengths of just 1,200mm or 1,300mm. Squeezing in a roll-top bath might even be possible - some are designed with squared-off sides to fit neatly into a corner. Or consider a slipper bath; they tend to be deep but short. Rather than having a separate shower, a shower bath, which gets wider at one end to accommodate room to shower, is a good option. These L- or P-shaped baths come with bespoke screens to keep the water in and some are just 1,500mm long.

## Showers

Particularly in an extra bathroom such as a loft room or ensuite, a bath is not so necessary and a shower room will make better use of limited space. Enclosures with bi-fold, pivot or sliding doors are space solvers, as are pentangle or quadrant enclosures that nestle into a corner. Or consider a wet-room design without an enclosure, but with a fixed panel to prevent the whole room getting splashed.

## Basins and WCs

Many basins and WCs are wall hung - a huge advantage in a

tiny room since they don't eat into the floor space so the room appears larger. 'Short projection' basins and WCs and those designed to fit into a corner are other good solutions for space-starved rooms. Cloakroom basins and some 'quadrant' or corner basins can be tiny - good for rinsing your hands, but not ideal for washing your face without splashing. Opting for a single monobloc tap simplifies the basin design, more so if you select a handleless one that turns on and off via a sensor.

## Furniture options

Fitted, modular or freestanding furniture? It's down to personal taste, though the current trend is to get everything off the floor, including cabinetry. Fitted solutions are tailored to the room for maximum space efficiency. Look out for reduced 21cm depth furniture designed for smaller rooms. Modular storage is a good halfway house, consisting of units in set sizes that you can combine for a personal look. Taking a leaf from kitchen manufacturers, bathroom designers have come up with clever drawers that fit around a basin, and deep drawers with shallower ones nestling inside. Streamline the look with push-close doors instead of handles.



**Space-saving furniture, such as a tall narrow unit with two cupboards and a multipurpose mirrored cabinet, will keep everything in its place in a small bathroom. High cabinet with two doors, £95; mirror cabinet (two shown), £50 each; washbasin cabinet, £115; storage bench, £40; all Silveran collection, Ikea**

## Lighting safety

- \* Bathroom light fittings are marked with an IP rating, which explains how close to the bath, shower or basin they can be placed. For example, zone 0 is for the interior of the bath or shower, while the area around a washbasin is zone 2. Find a diagram and further explanation of the ratings at [essexlighting.co.uk](http://essexlighting.co.uk).
- \* If ceiling spotlights are installed above a shower or bath they must be enclosed.
- \* A pendant light makes a great bathroom feature. As well as the standard enclosed globes, there are some bathroom-suitable chandeliers, but they must be rated (as above) to ensure they're safe.

- \* Standard light switches inside a bathroom are a definite no go. Instead, you'll need a ceiling-mounted switch on a pull-cord or a wall switch mounted outside the bathroom.
- \* Sockets, except the shaver type, are not permitted either, except in some cases where they are 3m from any water source, which is unlikely in a small bathroom.
- \* With all electrical work you must employ a qualified, registered electrician – even if you feel competent to tackle the work, it must be checked and verified by a registered electrician who can self-certify compliance with any building regulations that may apply.

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE HB PROJECT WHERE TO BUY PAGE

Create the illusion of space  
with mirrored wall panels  
and storage units



This well designed room  
features large mirrored  
cabinets above the bath  
and a fresh colour scheme.  
For similar, £12,000, Ripples

# ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BATHROOM FITTINGS

Choose stylish and practical designs  
to create a blissful bathroom that you can  
unwind in at the end of a long day



Vitale Sparkle slim  
oval freestanding bath  
(L1,690mm x W790mm),  
£2,430, Homebase

## Small designs

\* Measuring the space available for your new bath is the most important thing to do, especially if you have a compact bathroom that won't take a standard 1700mm length tub.

\* Low-volume options have special contouring inside, so the bath uses less water – ideal if you have a water meter.

\* Consider the material your bath is made of. Enamelled steel is popular as it's robust and long-lasting, while acrylic is lightweight, warm to the touch and retains heat well.

\* For a traditional feel, go for cast iron but make sure your floorboards and joists can take the weight. If not, they'll need reinforcing.



**1 Short lead** It is possible to get a freestanding bath in a smaller space if you opt for a shorter one. Edge bath in Quarrycast composite (L1,498mm x W799mm), £2,825, Victoria + Albert **2 Multipurpose** A P-shaped design is wider at one end, making it perfect for over-bath showering. Space acrylic shower-bath (L1,695mm x W695mm), £387, B&Q **3 Water-saving** This bath's low-volume design with internal contouring saves water. Celtic bath in enamelled steel (L1,700mm x W700mm), £294, Twyford **4 Classic beauty** A freestanding slipper bath with claw feet is ideal for a period bathroom. Winchester single-ended acrylic bath (L1,540mm x W720mm), £279.99, Victoria Plumb

**5 Space saver** Choose a tub with a curve at one end to fit an awkward space. Concept Spacemaker acrylic bath (L1,695mm x W695mm (550mm at narrow end)), £477, Ideal Standard **6 Whirlpool option** With the acrylic Reuse bath from Smiths Briten, you can add a whirlpool function for a spa-style soak in the comfort of your own home. Measuring L1,500mm x W700mm, it costs £319

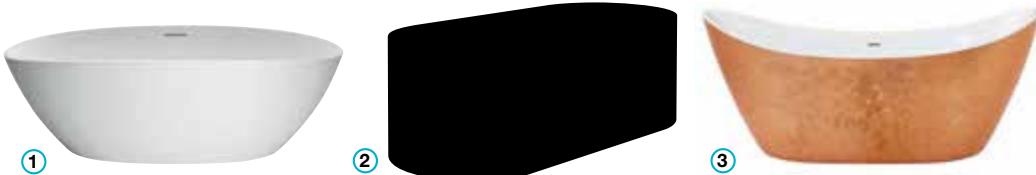
**Kick off your shoes and sit in a bath before you buy it - this way you can test the length, width and back support to make sure it's comfortable**

## Freestanding baths

\* When investing in a large freestanding tub, measure doorways and stairwidths to ensure it will fit through.

\* If you want your bath in the centre of the room, leave enough space to comfortably walk around it.

\* Before you buy brassware check with your plumber which type of tap or bath filler will be compatible.



**1 Heat seeker** The Bayou (L1,650mm x W690mm), £1,499 at Bathstore, has a lot going for it. It's made from thermally efficient Touchstone, so it keeps water warm, it has a gorgeous shape and it's slightly smaller than most freestanding baths so it could work in a compact space **2 Shapely design** Enamelled steel baths such as the BetteLux Oval Silhouette (L1,700mm x W750mm), £5,396 at Bette, are expertly welded to create a seamless freestanding look **3 Wow factor** In a stunning copper (pictured), silver or gold finish, the Hylton acrylic bath from Heritage Bathrooms is a lightweight alternative to cast iron. It measures L1,730mm x W730mm and costs £2,550

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## Walk-in options

- \* This type of shower will include an open section, so it's important to ensure the area closest to it is properly waterproofed.
- \* Low-level or completely flat shower trays are a good choice as there's no step to trip on. Make sure the tray slopes towards the drain for adequate water drainage and choose an anti-slip coating.
- \* Consider whether you want an exposed or concealed shower, depending on the look you prefer – neat and minimal or everything on display.
- \* An open wet room needs to be professionally tanked for complete waterproofing as there are no screens to protect the space from water.



**1 Spa style** Target aching muscles with four Gyrostream body jets, £199, and team with a large luxurious overhead shower with three spray functions, £9,391, handspray, £199 and diverter valve, £478; all Toto at Alternative Bathrooms **2 Clean lined** For a contemporary look, choose a frameless shower screen – this one comes with ClearShield protection for easy cleaning. Spectra SP400 toughened 8mm glass screen, £771; TR-35 shower tray, £456; Linneal shower, £1,300; all Aqata **3 DIY design** Update an existing shower screen with a band of frosted window film, which starts at £30, The Window Film Company **4 Curve appeal** If you don't want a fully open wet room style, opt for an end panel to create a more cosy cubicle. Aquaglass Purity closing walk-in shower screen with tray, £495, Frontline Bathrooms **5 Natural beauty** Matki's latest flat shower tray is made from durable polyester-coated cast stone but gives the look of real slate. Prices start at £378

**The latest showering technology includes wireless digital models with control units that can be installed up to 10 metres away - perfect for small bathrooms**

## Space-saving enclosures

- \* Quadrant designs save on floor space but still offer a roomy showering area.
- \* Bi-fold and sliding shower doors are ideal for ultra compact spaces as they don't open into the room and take up space.
- \* Toughened safety glass is always a good choice for shower enclosures.



**1 Mind the gap** Turn an alcove or unused cupboard into a shower. Ten single slider screen, £970; rectangular stone tray, £299; both Simpsons **2 Small wonder** A curved shower enclosure won't take up lots of floor space. Lumin8 bow-fronted quadrant enclosure, £895, Roman **3 In the fold** A smart solution for bijou bathrooms, this screen/door essentially opens into the enclosure. 8 Series Infold door, £875.40; side panel, £451.89; both Merlyn Showering

## Tap styles

- \* Check the water pressure in your home and look for a tap that suits. Some designs are only compatible with low- or high-pressure systems.
- \* A tap with a coated finish is a good investment buy as it won't rust or get limescale.
- \* Brushed, matt and satin finishes are easier to clean than chrome so may be a better option for families with young children.
- \* For a matching look, check whether there are coordinating basin taps and shower mixers available.
- \* With brassware, you do get what you pay for so avoid ultra-cheap designs as they're unlikely to last.



**1 Spot on** These mixers feature SilkMove ES technology for precise hot/cold water control. Essence four-hole single-lever bath combination, £885, Grohe **2 Modern twist** Want a contemporary take on the classic crosshead tap? The Solo built-in concealed stop valves with bath spout, £141.85, Just Taps Plus, is ideal **3 Floorstanding option** The Georgian mixer with handshower and lever handle, from £932.48, Perrin & Rowe, is ideal for a freestanding bath that's positioned in the centre of the room **4 Hi-tech look** This chrome brassware has an ultra-modern feel with its angular spout and striking rectangular base. Memoria deck-mounted five-hole bath mixer, £740, Vitra **5 Period charm** Perfect for a classic bathroom scheme, this chrome design combines traditional styling with modern technology. Edwardian bath tap, £95, Frontline Bathrooms **6 Hands free** An electronic bath mixer such as the Puravida, £669 from Hansgrohe, automatically activates water flow when you place your hands under the spout

**Low-pressure taps operate between 0.2 bars and 0.5 bars while high pressure ones operate at 0.5 bars and above. Always check with your plumber which type is suitable for your water system**

## Fab fillers

- \* Fillers are the chic answer to conventional protruding taps. Deck-mounted designs are popular, but if you want the option of double-ended bathing, choose a central, wall-mounted, or floorstanding bath fill.
- \* Overflow designs not only fill the bath, but they also have a mechanism to stop overfilling.



**1 Wonder wall** When your bath doesn't have any tap holes, a wall-mounted bath fill is the perfect match. Cube filler, £89.95, Better Bathrooms **2 Intelligent design** Make life simpler with Aqualisa's Rise digital bath fill, which delivers thermostatically blended water through a sleek overflow filler – so no need for taps. It costs from £503 with optional remote control at £120 **3 Neat solution** Complete a contemporary-style tub with this sleek deck-mounted piece. Ethos bath filler, £245, Crosswater

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## All-in-one units

- \* Think about how many people will use the cabinet and what they wish to store, plus the space available to fit the unit in
- \* A unit with drawers provides flexible storage – or choose a cupboard-style unit with shelves.
- \* Wall-mounted designs create the illusion of space as they leave the floor area clear, which also makes them easier to clean.
- \* In a compact area, look for a short projection basin with cabinet to match.
- \* Fit an LED strip light underneath a wall-hung design for ambient lighting after dark.



**1 Scandi cool** The pale oak veneer on Laura Ashley's Artisan freestanding unit and basin, £161, gives it cool Nordic style **2 Made to order** Aston Matthews Windsor single basin unit with Carrara marble top, £1,592, comes in a standard depth and height but any width can be supplied to suit your space. It can also be painted in the Farrow & Ball colour of your choice **3 Super sleek** Slim and stylish, the Mia basin unit, £363 at Roper Rhodes, is designed for cloakrooms **4 Design details** Spend a little more for the Silk vanity unit, £1,532, Keramag Design, and enjoy the benefits of a soft-close drawer and organising inner compartments. This countertop washbasin is also wall-mounted, which will make your room feel more spacious **5 His & Hers** Stop early morning squabbles with a two-door unit with double basins. Downton vanity unit with twin undermounted basins, £1,495, Utopia

**Pull-out drawers provide easy access and full visibility in a basin cabinet so you don't have to reach into awkward corners**

## Feature basins

- \* Consider the material you want – most basins are ceramic (china or porcelain) but you can also make a statement with a glass, stainless-steel, wood, marble or granite design.
- \* Special glazes can improve the surface hygiene of a basin and make it easier to clean so ask your supplier about this extra benefit.



**1 Side order** An offset basin with integrated shelf provides plenty of room for soaps, toothbrushes and toiletries. Cadenza washbasin in white cultured marble, £454, Ripples **2 Flower power** A textured surface will bring another dimension to the bathroom. This countertop basin is made from Cian – a solid surface material – and was inspired by an orchid leaf. Paradise Orchid Thinn basin, £545, BC Designs **3 Light up** The Public Luminist Luna vessel basin is a epoxy resin design that has the look of frosted glass but is super-strong. Best of all it has LED lighting, so it glows from below, £2,026 at Toto

## Wall-mounted cabinets

- \* Consider what you want to store in the cabinet and how much space you need between shelves for tall bottles and toiletries.
- \* Smart features include mirrored sides, double-sided mirrored doors, shaver sockets and sensor activated lighting.
- \* Mirrored cabinets can be used over the basin, freeing up wall space elsewhere – ideal in a small bathroom.
- \* Many designs come with integral LED lighting, which is effective and energy efficient.
- \* If you're buying a cabinet with lighting, make sure it's IP44 rated for safety.



**1 First aider** Looking for something with character? With its distressed finish and bold typography, the vintage-look First Aid cabinet, £69.95 at Dotcomgiftshop, is full of charm **2 So sleek** Simple and streamlined, the Atlanta cabinet, £49.99, Dunelm, is part of a collection that includes a toilet roll holder, towel ring and a bathroom bin **3 In a spin** This stylish mirrored cabinet rotates to reveal storage on the other side. Rotating bathroom cabinet, £200, Marks & Spencer **4 Good wood** You have a choice of natural or dark oak with the chic Wireworks slimline cabinet 550, which also features soft-close hinges and two polished glass shelves inside. It costs £212 at Occa-Home **5 Illuminating idea** A cabinet with integrated lighting will help when applying make-up. Ember 80 mirrored LED cabinet with wraparound mirrored sides and recessed shaver socket, £599, HiB

**A wall-mounted loo is supported by a sturdy frame fixed to the floor and wall. It can then be neatly enclosed by a false wall or ready-made furniture**

## Hygienic WCs

- \* The latest WCs include rimless designs that leave nowhere for dirt and bacteria to hide and can be easily wiped down. Wall-hung models also make cleaning easier.
- \* If budget allows, an all-in-one WC and bidet is a great solution.



**1 Green dream** Azzurra's Prua WC is designed to meet water-saving specifications and is easy to clean because it doesn't have a rim, £384 at Alchemy Award **2 Two-in-one** Geberit's AquaClean Sela, £2,386, combines a WC and bidet in one neat unit **3 Compact cutie** Designed to take up minimal space, the slimline Pro rimless wall-hung WC from Laufen, £310, doesn't have a flushing rim, leaving nowhere for dirt to linger. Instead, water reaches every part of the inner bowl, which increases hygiene HB

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE WHERE TO BUY PAGE

# LATEST LOOKS UPDATE

Select from on-trend designs and finishes to create a style you'll love



**PURE AND SIMPLE**  
**Fresh, clean and functional, white**  
**doesn't have to be plain. Just add**  
**interest with different textures**

**Modern country** • Brick-style tiles on the walls and hexagonal mosaics on the floor bring a contemporary edge to this rustic loft wet room. For similar tiles, try Shapes Hexagon Matt White mosaic, £63.97 a sq metre, Topps Tiles • White-painted louvre shutters and a wooden ceiling add texture and geometric lines • The traditional-style roll-top Richmond bath, from £1,635, Victoria + Albert, and classic taps and shower fittings contrast with the modern tiles for a characterful mix of old and new • If you have space, fit two showers in a wet room – it's indulgent but can also be a timesaver in the mornings if there's often a queue for the shower • Finish off the modern country look with natural accessories in wood, clay and linen



**Big it up** • Large-format tiles will make a small room feel more spacious, so go large on the walls – try Super Matte Wall tiles (250mm x 400mm), £1 each, Tile Mountain. The Devon Concrete tiled flooring is £25.25 a sq metre from Tons of Tiles • Get the open wet-room look without having water all over the room by fitting a frameless shower screen and team with a drencher-style head and hand-held shower, Dream DCV, £690, Aqualisa



**Fabulously French** • White doesn't have to mean cold and sterile; this elegant bathroom uses a soft palette of warm off-white shades on the walls, floor, shutters and fitted units. Shutters, from £290 a sq metre, Shutterly Fabulous • A pretty vintage lace curtain adds softness • Fitted units painted just a shade or two darker than the walls blend in but also add another layer of interest to the scheme



**Pared-back luxe** • Marble is back in vogue – rather than forking out for the real thing, get the look for a fraction of the price. These easycare Marfil Carrara porcelain tiles are £40 a sq metre at Piazza Tiles • Using the same large-format marble-effect tiles on the floor and walls creates a smart effect • Get the minimalist look with all-white fittings like these Zucchetti. Kos ZFA621 freestanding single-lever taps, from £1,850 each



**Monochrome mix** • Make a feature of architectural details such as windows and beams by painting them a deep charcoal shade • The curved lines of the rimless egg-shaped Lagoon bath, £1,799 from Bathstore, create the perfect contrast to the straight lines of the beams and streamlined fitted cupboards • Soften the look with a pale wood-effect floor. Try Amtico's Eden Oak, from £37.50 a sq metre

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**STATEMENT STYLE**  
**Create a dramatic scheme by using  
rich colours and bold patterns**

**Period elegance** ● Deep tones can transform a small bathroom. Blur the boundaries of a space by painting the walls, woodwork, and even the shutters in the same warm shade of grey – it will give a harmonious and sophisticated look ● Use painted panelling rather than tiles to add interest to the walls. Paint in a tough finish such as Little Greene's Intelligent emulsion in Dark Lead so it can easily be cleaned, £43.50 for 2.5L ● Shutters are practical and look great in a classic-style bathroom. They're available in a wide range of colours – try Shutterly Fabulous ● A parquet-style floor in dark wood complements the curved lines of the traditional-style roll-top bath, from £1,223; Kew basin and pedestal, from £992; Kew close-coupled WC, £1,078; all CP Hart



**Bright contrast** • A rich shade of raspberry above the picture rail gives instant wow factor. This one is Crown's Delicious Pink Kitchen and Bathroom matt emulsion, £25.99 for 2.5L. Link the colour to towels and accessories • White-painted floorboards create a clean, crisp finish. Try Ronseal's Diamond Hard floor paint, £15.99 for 750ml, Homebase • Roll-top baths needn't be expensive; choose an acrylic design from Bathstore from £549



**Art Deco glamour** • Transform your look with paint, using a teal shade on the walls such as Dulux's Celestial Blue Bathroom+ Soft Sheen, £27.99 for 2.5L • Art Deco-style sanitaryware and a roll-top bath are lasting investments that won't date. These are from the Cooke & Lewis Octavia collection at B&Q • Team traditional fittings with a chequerboard floor - a vinyl design is practical. Try Colours Tenora Black and White tile-effect vinyl, £10 a sq metre, B&Q



**Go geometric** • A classic pattern is updated with a beautiful mix of matt tiles in shades of chalky blue on the floor and up one wall. Barcelona Brick tiles in Sarria, Raval and Barrio, £89.58 a sq metre, Fired Earth • An angular double basin and taps echo the geometric tile pattern. Lonsdale basin, £525; Liberty basin mixers, £525 each; all Fired Earth. A wall-hung design means the pattern can be displayed more effectively



**Seventies influence** • Paint walls in a dramatic, dark shade such as Plum Preserve, £24.99 for 2.5L, Dulux. Coordinate with mosaics - Peridot purple mix tiles, £9.99 for a 300mm x 300mm sheet, Homebase • Make a feature of an alcove by tiling the back wall and adding a slimline cupboard. Bracciano modular tower unit, £589, Homebase • A two-drawer Bracciano basin unit, £749, Homebase, keeps the room neat

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**NATURAL WORLD**  
**Gentle shades of stone and tactile textures**  
**make for a relaxing sanctuary**

**Raw beauty** • The unique patterns and colours in stone create stunning feature walls. Using oversized tiles on the wall creates a clean, modern look. Annapurna Home brushed quartz, £122 a sq metre, Porcelanosa • Plain textured slate tiles on the floor contrast beautifully with the smooth stone and glossy white walls • A wall-hung vanity unit leaves the floor area clear – helpful when it's time to clean. Zen stone basin and drawer front in Blanco Athenas with Nogal warm unit, £3,150, Porcelanosa • For a fuss-free look forget the shower curtain or screen and opt for an open walk-in shower with a low-profile shower tray



**Shoreline chic** • In this spa-style room the standout feature is the raised-pebble-effect floor in warm sandy tones. Navarra chalk luxury vinyl tiles, £39.99 a sq metre, Karndean • Cool grey stone-effect wall tiles in the shower area contrast with the honey tones of the wood wall and pebble floor. For similar, try Sandwave tiles, £8.09 each, Topps Tiles • Add storage with woven baskets and a bamboo ladder. Similar available from Graham and Green, £45



**Character piece** • Create interest on the floor by inserting a section of patterned tiles to mimic the look of a rug. Original Style's Falkirk design made up of Dover tiles in white and grey, £85.69 a sq metre, gives an elegantly classic look • Use different finishes on adjacent walls; contrast matt painted panelling with glossy brick-style tiles – just stick to the same clotted cream tone for a harmonious look



**Global influence** • Using just one style of tile on the floor, walls and bath panel creates a dramatic effect. Hexagonal tiles like this Hexa design in Bone and Cement, £24.94 a sq metre from Topps Tiles, are perfect for getting a modern Moroccan look • Rather than have a separate shower tray, install a floor former to create a wet-room-style sloped floor and drain



**Grand rustic** • Combine putty-coloured units and soft blue walls for a cool country look • Fitted storage works well in a busy bathroom. Hampton Mocha 600mm semi-countertop unit with Geo semi-countertop basin, from £481.50; 400mm storage unit, from £320; all Roper Rhodes • Add character with vintage-style tin barn stars, £34 for three, Housekeeping at notonthehighstreet.com **HB**

# ALL THE ESSENTIALS

Practical and stylish fittings and finishing touches to complete your perfect scheme





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## Hanging around

### Main picture

**Bright sparks** These lemon and royal blue towels lift the all-white scheme. Baskets are a smart storage solution – they can be placed by the bath so towels are to hand when you need to dry off. Towels, from £5 for a hand towel; large wire storage basket, £10; Fish Tales bath mat, £12; aqua tumbler, £5; soap dish, £3; wire mirror, £20; lantern, £10; all By Sainsbury's

**1 Ladder of success** The Sprutt towel holder, £18, Ikea, doesn't just hold towels – it can accommodate a basket for all your lotions and potions and there's even space to hang your body brush. Basket, £6, Ikea

**2 Sideline** When you don't have enough wall space for a vertical radiator, you could install a horizontal model instead. This one comes with a built-in towel

rail. Ice Bagno in Matt White, £935, The Radiator Company

**3 DIY it** Sarah Beeny's collection of high-end handles and knobs for Häfele can be used to create a pretty pegboard to hang your towels from – these beauties are the Prado design, £18 for two, Amazon

**4 Traditional element** Finish a classic bathroom scheme with a period-look heated towel rail. The floor-mounted Grandeur towel warmer, from £2,663 at Vogue UK, fits the bill perfectly.

**5 Dual purpose** Who doesn't like an accessory that does a bit of multitasking? This vintage-style wall shelf with towel rail, £29.95, Melody Maison, comes in a distressed cream finish with elegant scrolling at the top, and has enough room for towels and any pretty toiletries you want out on display



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## Tile style

**1 Black magic** A wall of black tiles makes a dramatic background to white sanitaryware. The intricate honeycomb patterned ceramic Hex tile comes in a large 298mm x 498mm format in matt or gloss, £36 a sq metre, British Ceramic Tile

**2 Retro revival** Metro tiles will give your room a classic look. Combine two colours and use one to frame the other. Cinema 100mm x 200mm glazed ceramic tiles in Pantages (black) and Lincoln (green), £49.80 a sq metre, Fired Earth

**3 Grand illusion** Metallic Squares is a large format porcelain tile for walls or floors in a striking textured design that catches the light. It measures 598mm x 598mm and costs £26.99 a sq metre from Tile Mountain

**4 Square up** Be bang on trend with a cool geometric pattern – these porcelain tiles are for walls or floors. Regal Cubis Mosaic Polished 340mm x 294mm tile, £199.98 a sq metre, Topps Tiles

**5 Wood effect** Enjoy the detail and texture of wood in the bathroom with the stunning Boardwalk porcelain tile. Shown in Maple, it's also available in Kauri, Oak and Nut. The 25cm x 120cm strip Boardwalk tile costs £150 a sq metre from Stone & Ceramic Warehouse

**6 High shine** An iridescent tile is the perfect choice for smaller bathrooms as it will reflect light around the room, instantly making the space feel larger. Ash Blue ceramic 65cm x 20cm tile, £30 a sq metre, Equipe Ceramicas



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## Store and order

**1 Colour burst** Use these vibrant ceramic jars to store cotton wool and smaller bits and bobs. They come in three sizes and three shades – red, yellow and teal – and cost from £11 at The Contemporary Home

**2 L for leather** Suitable for classic or contemporary schemes, the Bedford leather basket comes in a tan finish, as shown, as well as grey, black or white and costs £110 from Leather and Lavender

**3 Box clever** Get the New England beach-style look with distressed wooden trays, £19.99 for two, The Range

**4 His & hers** A striking three-tiered design that would suit all the family, Betty Jackson. Black designer wooden caddy, £100 at Debenhams

**5 Industrial chic** Metal, rope, streamlined design – it all adds up to a contemporary storage

solution for your sponges, soaps and shower gels. Wire basket with rope handle, £20 for two, By Sainsbury's

**6 Bath buddy** With the Umbra Aquala bamboo bathtub caddy from Amara, £45, you can lie back and relax with all your luxuries close to hand. It even has a built-in wine-glass holder and foldaway book support

**7 Ecofriendly** The Grace Aqua laundry baskets are woven by hand from recycled plastics and come in fresh shades of mint, soft white, grey and blue. Ideal for laundry or general storage, the small design costs £45 and the large is £55 from Berry Red

**8 Basket weave** Use this seagrass dipped storage basket for make-up and accessories – perfect for an ensuite where you can carry them through to the bedroom. It costs £50 for two at House of Fraser



CONTINUED OVER PAGE



①



②

## Light fantastic

**1 Looking glass** With an illuminated mirror, you can clearly see your reflection – and there's something very 1950s Hollywood about it. The Astro Galaxy Square IP44 rated mirror with integrated lighting, £200, Astro Lighting, is both glamorous and modern

**2 Instant update** Change outdated light fixtures for something more eyecatching to give your bathroom a whole new look. Södersvik LED wall and ceiling lamps are real showstoppers, £59 each, Ikea

**3 Focal point** Make your shower area stand out by fitting aluminium Spinakers along one wall – perfect for highlighting an attractive mosaic. In a choice of finishes, they cost from £115 each at John Cullen Lighting

**4 Right angle** The bell-shaped glass shade comes in white or black and the wall plate features an integral dimmer switch. The Kelby wall light, £85, Holloways of Ludlow, is for use in Zone 3 only – see page 102 for information on lighting safety in the bathroom

**5 Period charm** The Upton clear glass swan neck bathroom light from Fritz Fryer is a modern take on a classic wall fitting and is ideal for a traditional scheme. It's priced £240

**6 Hidden wonder** In a windowless bathroom, you can use lighting to brighten the space and create feature areas. The LD22 Eco LED linear light fitting, £193 for 914mm at Brilliant Lighting, has been fitted underneath a mirrored wall cabinet



③



④



⑤



⑥



1



2

## Finishing touches

**1 Funky feel** Every neutral bathroom deserves a little burst of bright colour and towels can be the most economical way to do it. Try Tesco's Geometric and Bright Stripe bath towels, £9 each. There's also a range of matching accessories from just £4 for a tumbler (pictured)

**2 Quirky kit** For a fun holiday vibe check out the Linea California Kitsch bathroom collection with its pineapple containers. Tumbler, £10; soap dispenser, £14 and storage jar, £14. The collection also includes bobble trim hand towels and colourful mini lanterns, all £10 each from House of Fraser

**3 Luxury pile** Made of 700gsm pure Egyptian cotton, these towels are heavier and more absorbent than most with a luxurious deep pile. Spa towels, from £12 for a hand towel, The White Company

**4 Body beautiful** The new Emma Bridgewater Feels Like Home range of candles and lotions are fragranced with a delicious mix of natural camomile, lavender and orange blossom to put you in a relaxed state while you have your bath. Room diffuser and scented candle, £18 each; body lotion, £10; all Marks & Spencer

**5 Smoky finish** You'll feel like you're in a luxury hotel with these sophisticated brown and white-tinted glass accessories. Hotel smoke glass lotion dispenser and storage jar, £9.99 each; soap dish, £6.99; all Dunelm

**6 Quick dry** Inspired by a Turkish hammam, these Anatayla cotton towels dry in no time, are super soft and have a classic blue and white border. From £15 for two hand towels at made.com 



3



4



5



6

# WHERE TO BUY

**Alchemy Award** 01279 771159; alchemyaward.com

**Alternative Bathrooms** 020 3375 9009; alternativebathrooms.com

**Amara** 0800 587 7645; amara.com

**Amazon** amazon.co.uk

**Amtico** 0121 745 0800; amtico.co.uk

**Aqata** 01455 896500; aqata.co.uk

**Aqualisa** 01959 560010; aqualisa.co.uk

**Aston Matthews** 020 7226 7220; astonmatthews.co.uk

**Astro Lighting** 01279 427001; astrolighting.co.uk

**Bathstore** 0800 023 2323; bathstore.com

**B&Q** 0800 389 5516; diy.com

**BC Designs** 01206 827100; bcdesigns.co.uk

**Berry Red** 0845 450 3937; berryred.co.uk

**Bette** 0844 800 0547; bette.co.uk

**Better Bathrooms** 0844 484 7678; betterbathrooms.com

**Brilliant Lighting** 01845 525664; brilliantlighting.co.uk

**British Ceramic Tile** 01626 834774; britishceramictile.com

**Contemporary Home (The)**

0845 130 8229; tch.net

**CP Hart** 0845 600 1950; cphart.co.uk

**Crosswater** 0845 873 8840; crosswater.co.uk

**Crown** 0870 240 1127; crownpaint.co.uk

**Debenhams** 0844 561 6161; debenhams.com

**Dotcomgiftshop** 020 8746 2473; dotcomgiftshop.com

**Dulux** 0333 222 7171; dulux.co.uk

**Dunelm** 0345 165 6565; dunelm-mill.co.uk

**Equipe Ceramics** equipeceramics.com

**Fired Earth** 0845 293 8798; firedearth.com

**Fritz Fryer** 01989 567416; fritzfryer.co.uk

**Frontline Bathrooms** 0845 470 2424; frontlinebathrooms.co.uk

**Geberit** 01926 516800 or 0800 077 8365; geberit.co.uk

**Grohe** 0871 200 3414; grohe.co.uk

**Hansgrohe** 01372 465655; hansgrohe.co.uk

**Heritage Bathrooms** 0330 026 8501; heritagebathrooms.com

**HiB** 020 8441 0352; hib.co.uk

**Holloways of Ludlow** 020 7602 5757; hollowaysoftudlow.com

**Homebase** 0345 077 8888; homebase.co.uk

**House of Fraser** 0345 602 1073; houseoffraser.co.uk

**Ideal Standard** 01482 346461; ideal-standard.co.uk

**Ikea** 020 3645 0000; ikea.co.uk

**John Cullen Lighting** 020 7371 9000; johncullenlighting.co.uk

**Just Taps Plus** 01895 442211; justtapsplus.co.uk

**Karndean Designflooring** 01386 820100; karndean.co.uk

**Keramag Design** 01270 871756; keramagdesign.com

**Laufen** 01530 510007; uk.laufen.com

**Laura Ashley** 01225 303929; lauraashleybathroomcollection.com

**Leather and Lavender** 0771 005 6335; leatherandalavender.co.uk

**Little Greene** 0845 880 5855; littlegreenecom

**made.com** 0345 450 6118

**Marks & Spencer** 0333 014 8000; marksandspencer.com

**Matki** 01454 322888; matki.co.uk

**Melody Maison** 01302 711116; melodymaison.co.uk

**Merlyn Showering** 00 353 567 791555; merlynshowering.com

**Occa-Home** 0330 363 0330; occa-home.co.uk

**Original Style** 01392 473000; originalstyle.com

**Perrin & Rowe** 01708 526361; perrinandrowe.co.uk

**Piazza Tiles** 0845 257 0227; piazzatiles.com

**Porcelanosa** porcelanosa.co.uk

**Radiator Company (The)** 01342 302250; theradiatorcompany.co.uk

**Range (The)** 0845 026 7598; therange.co.uk

**Ripples** 0800 107 0700; ripples.ltd.uk

**Roman** 0845 050 4032 or 01325 328033; roman-showers.com

**Roper Rhodes** 01225 303900; roperrhodes.co.uk

**Ronseal** 0114 240 9469; ronseal.co.uk

**Simply Loft** 0800 917 7571; simplyloft.co.uk

**Simpsons** 0845 873 8840; simpsons-enclosures.co.uk

**Smiths Briten** 0845 634 4321; purebathroomcollection.co.uk

**Tesco Direct** 0330 123 4050; tesco.com/direct

**Tile Mountain** 01782 223822; tilemountain.co.uk

**Sainsbury's** 0330 123 1962 or 0800 636 262; sainsburyshome.co.uk

**Shutterly Fabulous** 0800 012 6615 or 0330 100 0975; shutterlyfabulous.com

**Stone & Ceramic Warehouse** 020 8993 5545; stoneandceramicwarehouse.co.uk

**Tons of Tiles** 01752 785623; tonsoftiles.co.uk

**Topps Tiles** 0800 783 6262; toppstiles.co.uk

**Toto** 020 7831 7544; gb.toto.com

**Twyford** 01270 879777; twyfordbathrooms.co.uk

**Utopia** 01902 406446; utopiagroup.com

**Victoria + Albert** 01952 221100; vandabaths.com

**Victoria Plumb** 0344 804 4848; victoriaplumb.com

**Vitra** 01235 750990; vitra.co.uk

**Vogue UK** 01902 387000; vogueuk.co.uk

**White Company (The)** 020 3758 9222; thewhitecompany.com

**Window Film Company (The)**

01494 854012; windowfilm.co.uk

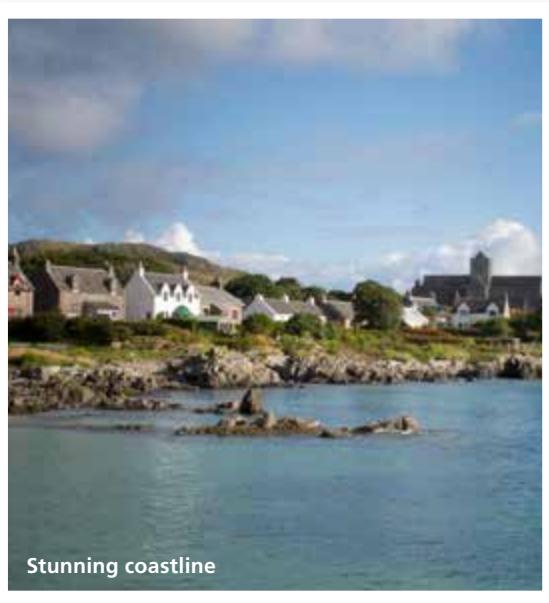
**Zucchettikos** 00 39 0322 954700; zucchettikos.it/en



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PHOTOGRAPHS: COLIN POOLE; HUNTER HEDWORTH

**EXTRA  
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HB PROJECT  
DECORATING  
SPECIAL**

**AUGUST ISSUE – ON SALE 3 JULY**

For daily style inspiration visit [housebeautiful.co.uk](http://housebeautiful.co.uk)

The flowing, curved lines of the Dea collection are stylish and functional



# WIN a luxury bathroom

Create a blissful sanctuary with this elegant collection from Ideal Standard

**S**tunning and thoughtfully designed, the new Dea range of ceramics and furniture from Ideal Standard would be a wonderful addition to any bathroom.

Now House Beautiful readers have the chance to win their choice of stylish and practical Dea products. There are two prizes, each worth up to £3,000.

Created by award-winning designer Dick Powell, the collection's curved, flowing lines combine beauty with functionality. The water-efficient basins are deep enough to wash in and have sloping fronts so that users can stand in closer, while the double-ended baths are elegant and luxurious – perfect for reclining.

Co-ordinating storage, which provides plenty of space for toiletries, comes in a choice of colours and textures – from glossy dark grey and matt dark wood to gleaming white and neutral beige.

To find out more about Ideal Standard products and the Dea range, visit [ideal-standard.co.uk](http://ideal-standard.co.uk) or call 01482 346461.

## HouseBeautiful



**Q What is the name of the range of bathroom products being offered in this competition?**

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**TERMS AND CONDITIONS** \*Calls from mobiles and other networks may cost more. If you phone or text your entry after the advertised closing date, you will not be entered but you will be charged. Entry is open to residents living in mainland UK. Only one entry per household. The winners will be selected at random from all correct entries after the closing date. Service provider: Spoke (0333 202 3390). No purchase is necessary. The prize is not transferable. Existing fittings will not be removed. Installation not included. No cash alternative. For full terms and conditions turn to p6. DATA PROTECTION We will use the information you supply to process your competition entry. For our privacy policy, visit [hearst.co.uk/dp](http://hearst.co.uk/dp)



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# TOP NOTCH

A well-planned loft conversion has resulted in a tranquil suite of rooms.

Pip Winter and her husband Charles, both 48, and their children Edward, Holly and Annabel moved from London to this 1920s five-bedroom detached house in Epsom, Surrey in 2004. Having spent many years working on the rest of the house, they've finished it off with the completion of their new loft room.

CONTINUED OVER NEXT PAGE

**STORAGE**  
**Built-in wardrobes make good use of the sloping space**

**BEFORE**

**ACTION PLAN**

- APPOINT BUILDER
- GET PLANS DRAWN UP BY ARCHITECT
- ADD A DORMER WINDOW FOR HEIGHT
- PLAN BATHROOM AND DECORATION

**WALL COLOUR**  
Pip chose a muted  
grey/green to  
complement the  
wooden furniture

**WINDOW**  
Without the inclusion  
of a dormer window  
it would have been  
impossible for Pip and  
Charles to sit up in bed

**BED**  
A classic lit bateau  
has been given  
a modern update  
with a painted finish

**FLOORING**  
Carpet is hardwearing  
and robust yet still  
cosy underfoot



'It really feels as though we've gained a whole new floor - it's so spacious and everything has been finished to a high standard,' SAYS PIP

#### Loft conversions take a lot of preparation

Seven years ago we toyed with the idea of a loft conversion, but two things stopped us: money and the worry that we wouldn't get enough head height. We'd always liked the idea of having our own floor - a sanctuary to retreat to at the end of the day - but we knew it wouldn't be an easy build. In 2013 we started looking at it again and took on a builder, Paul Wills, who we knew and trusted. He had lots of ideas, but because it was going to be a complicated build he suggested that we consult an architect, which really worked for us.

#### What solutions did the architect come up with?

Our previous plans had shown the stairs coming up in the middle of the loft, with a bedroom to the right and a bathroom to the left. However, we wanted it to feel more like another floor, and to be able to walk through the bedroom and have the bathroom at the end. The architect suggested the stairs be taken over the bedroom below to give us an L-shape, which resulted in a much more spacious layout.

#### Laws have changed since you first thought of a conversion

The planning laws have been relaxed, which means the roof height can now be raised to the level of the tallest chimney pot. This enabled us to include a proper shower. I'm 5ft 11in and Charles is 6ft 2in so we'd been put off before by the idea that we'd end up with a cramped bathroom - but we now have plenty of space. The only compromise we had to make was the inclusion of some supporting steels partway down the bedroom, but we decided to use this to divide off a section of it as a dressing room with built-in wardrobes.

#### Everything went smoothly...

Once the plans were drawn up and passed we discussed it all with

our builder. We knew he'd be on site every day and that was really important to us. The build took four months from March 2014.

#### Were there any last minute changes?

We'd chosen our bed but while measuring up, realised we wouldn't have enough space to sit up in it. For that reason we decided to add in a dormer window, which made all the difference. Luckily this was before the plans had been submitted and work begun.

#### So the bed was the starting point for the scheme

Yes, I knew I wanted a painted sleigh bed. I'd seen one in a shop but it was very expensive. On the internet I found a guy who was bringing beds over from France for about half the price. He was working out of farm buildings in Kent, so we drove down there and chose one. We got it finished in Farrow & Ball's Elephant's Breath and I painted the bathroom in the same shade for continuity. For contrast in the bedroom I picked Mizzle, a grey/green that's incredibly calming.

#### How did you decide on the bathroom?

I spotted an idea in a brochure and loved the look of a large vanity unit with double basins. The furniture came in cream and tied in with some natural, striped tiles I'd seen locally. These were neutral but textured and in various shades that look right.

#### There's a mix of old and new pieces

We inherited some furniture that we love, and the rich wood goes well with creams and greens. Our bedside tables are actually two sets of drawers from a desk that had been taken apart, and we have an old campaign chest in one corner. It's important to us that they've come from relatives rather than being shop bought.

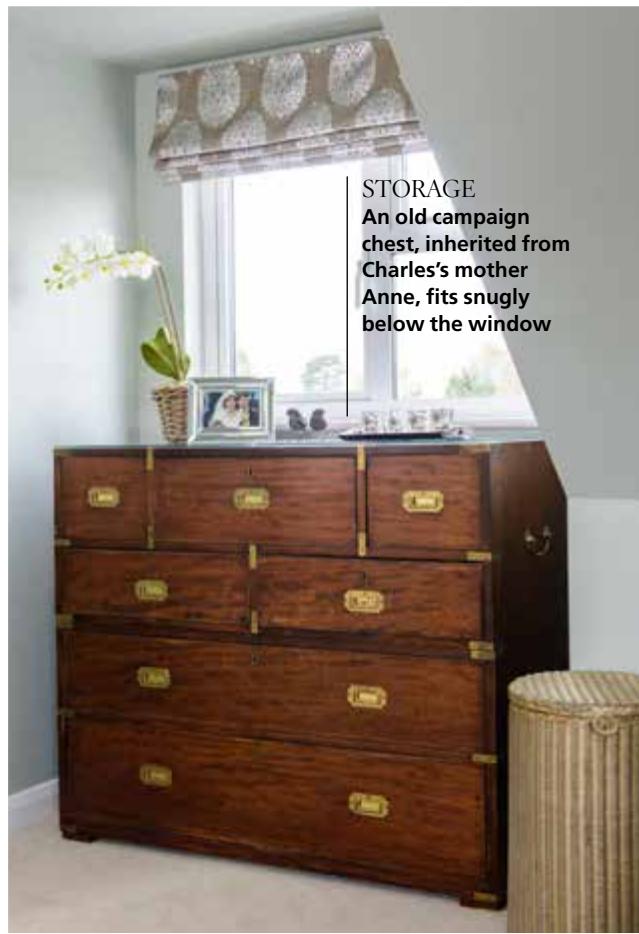
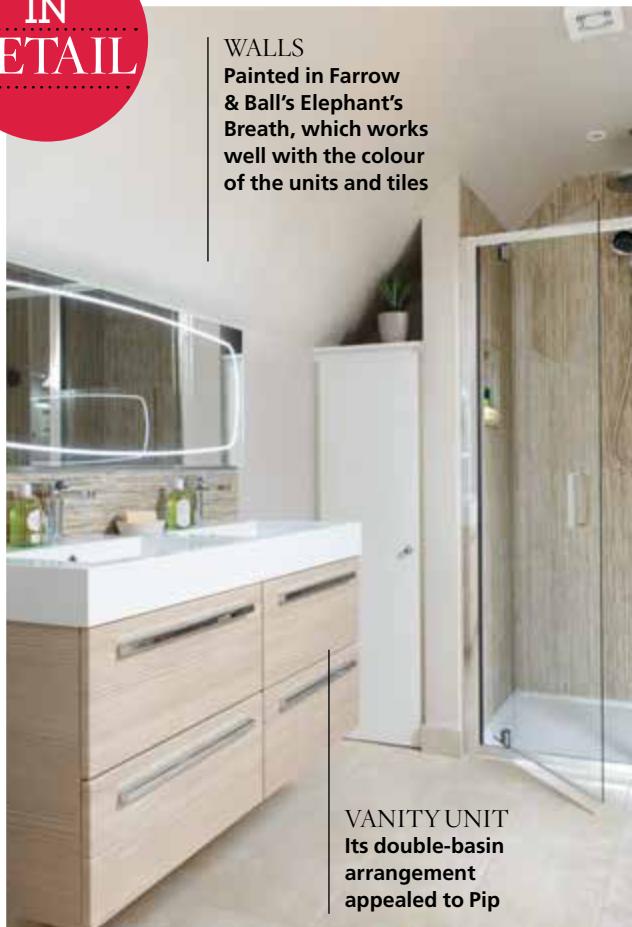
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IN  
DETAIL

## THE NEW LAYOUT

An L-shape allows for a dressing room between the bedroom and bathroom



## GET THE LOOK



Normandy white **sleigh bed**, £249, time4sleep.co.uk



Etched teal **vase**, £25, Shabby Chic collection, House of Fraser



Dreamy Dragonfly **cushion**, £30, Sweetpea & Willow

## WHAT IT COST

## BEDROOM AND DRESSING ROOM

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Paint.....     | £130   |
| Furniture..... | £1,869 |
| Carpet.....    | £540   |
| Fabric.....    | £250   |
| Radiators..... | £394   |
| Wardrobes..... | £1,000 |

## BATHROOM

|                             |               |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Paint.....                  | £72           |
| Furniture and fittings..... | £4,391        |
| Tiles.....                  | £527          |
| <b>Total</b> .....          | <b>£9,173</b> |

## SHOPPING LIST

**Bedroom walls** painted in Mizzle Estate emulsion, £65 for 5L, Farrow & Ball. Lit bateau kingsize **bed**, painted in Farrow & Ball's Elephant's Breath, £949; **mattress**, £495; matching **mirror**, £60; all Tasha Interiors. Deco Multi **chest**, £425; Arabella stick **lamp**, £26; both Next. Greendale Endeavour **carpet** in Angora, £30 a sq metre, Milners. **Cushions and blinds** made up in Adagio in Mercury, £25 a metre, John Lewis. Seven-bar Cove white **radiator**, £97; large white **radiator**, £297; both Radiating Style. Harmony White **bedding set**, £130 (in sale); Taupe square pintuck quilted **throw**, £40; **Pembridge cushions**, £45 each; all Kelly Hoppen. **Dragonfly cushion**, from a selection, Marks & Spencer. Pale green wool **throw**, £50, Jacaranda. Kartell reproduction **lamp**, £39.99, eBay. Bedside **lights**, £10 each, Homebase. Fenn square silk **lampshades** in Marble, £30 each, Laura Ashley.

**Bathroom walls** painted in Elephant's Breath Modern emulsion, £72 for 5L, Farrow & Ball. Modular **vanity unit** in Champagne Linear, £1,712; Deluxe Outline **mirror**, £599; both Utopia. Platinum dual **shower**, £870; Beam Pivot **shower enclosure**, £475; inline **panel**, £225; Precision basin **mixer taps**, £155 each; all Mira Showers. **WC**, £200, HPS. Linea Sand **wall tiles** and Crema Matt **floor tiles**; both £43.92 a sq metre, International Tiles. Ashby **radiator**, £194, Radiating Style **HB**

**LINEAR DESIGN**

A smart woven stripe brings a nautical air to a window. **Marine Soft Stripe** Roman blind (W60cm x 120cm drop), £40, Next

**SIMPLE FOLDS**

This **Stylish Silver** made-to-measure blind in pale greys is a relaxing choice (W65cm x 75cm drop), £148, Hillarys

**ROLL REVERSAL**

Swedish blind in pretty **For the Love of Rose** fabric has a stripe reverse (W60cm x 100cm drop), £213.12, Vanessa Arbuthnott

**OPEN AND SHUT CASE**

Fabric slats glide open or closed to adjust the light. **Colours Day & Night** white roller blind (W60cm x 160cm drop), £19, B&Q

# In the SHADE

Up or down, a beautiful blind completes the look of your windows

**STAY WARM**

Cut sun in summer and keep snug in winter with the **Duck Egg Mila** thermal blackout blind (W61cm x 162cm drop), £14.99, Dunelm

**EASY TRANSFORMATIONS**

You needn't get bored with the Fabric Changer in **Spring Twig White** (W60cm x 100cm drop), £92.56, Bloc Blinds

**PERFECTLY PATTERNED**

Opt for a bold and beautiful fabric like this **Harlequin Pod 9339** (W60cm x 100cm drop), £135.53, Tuiss

**ON THE ROOF**

Fit a rooflight with the Colour Collection **Scholten & Baijings Blue 6523** Roman blind (W55cm x 98cm drop), £129.60, Velux

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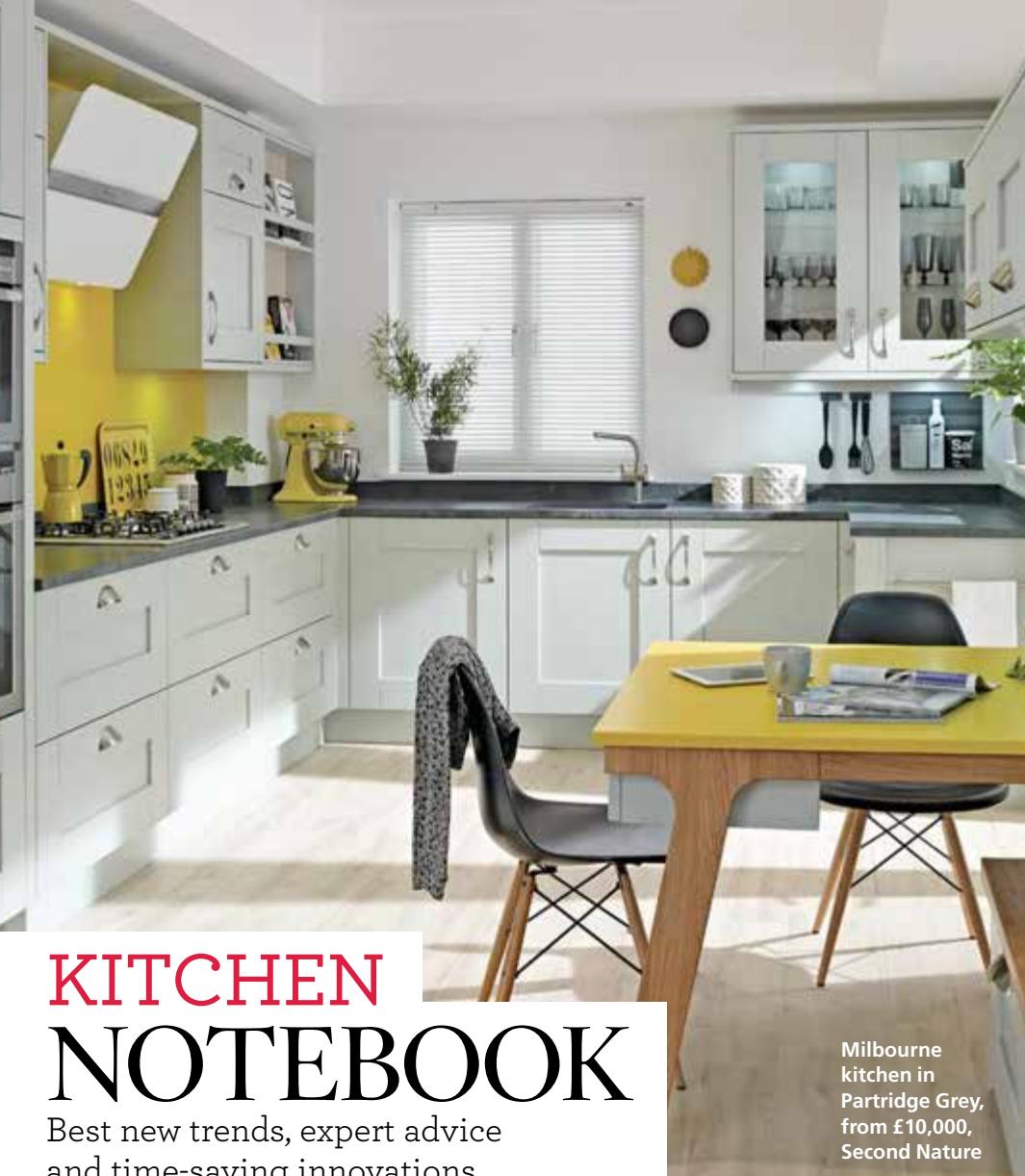
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## KITCHEN NOTEBOOK

Best new trends, expert advice and time-saving innovations

Milbourne kitchen in Partridge Grey, from £10,000, Second Nature

### Family favourite

**Create a hardworking, multi-purpose space with advice from Graeme Smith from Second Nature kitchens**

- ✖ Grey is a modern neutral that's easy to live with and will stand the test of time, adapting effortlessly to contemporary and classic schemes.
- ✖ An overpainted foil finish is an affordable alternative to a painted timber door. Milbourne (left) has a subtle grain finish to give the look of painted timber.
- ✖ Be bold and introduce a zingy accent colour to a wall and accessories. Here, a solid Hi-Macs worktop in Banana finish used for the table top creates a vibrant feature.
- ✖ Make more of a compact space by including a small table, that you can use for relaxed dining and as a work table.
- ✖ Plan storage carefully, not just the obvious places to stash pans, crockery and food but also more decorative storage such as racks for recipe books and a low-level unit for toys or homework.
- ✖ For bespoke looks on a budget, pair cheaper materials such as laminate with granite or stone.



### GOOD IDEA

#### Light up

Fitting Sensio's new dimmable LED Pads under wall cabinets provides glare-free illumination. The pad is available with a sensor, which allows the light to be turned on and off or dimmed by placing a hand close to the sensor. A 4W Under Cabinet SLS LED Pad with sensor costs £46.56.

WORDS ANDREA MANLEY

### 3 OF A KIND

Making a drink from summer fruit is easy in one of these machines



▲ Smoothies and drinks are ready to take out with this mini blender that blitzes fruit, veg and other ingredients into the same bottle you drink from. It has two speeds, a pulse function and two durable drinks containers. **Sport2Go blender, £29.99, Kenwood**



▲ Available in several mouthwatering shades, this compact juicer combines a citrus press and juicer in one. The rotary speed automatically adjusts to different fruit consistencies and the wide funnel helps draw the ingredients in. **Novis Vita juicer, £299.99, UK Juicers**



▲ This stainless-steel juicer has a slow setting for soft fruits and a fast one for apples or carrots. Double sieve technology refines fruit and then pulp for maximum juice extraction and the jug has a froth separator. **Dualit juicer, £99.99, Lakeland**

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE WHERE TO BUY PAGE

**HSK Renodeco wall panels in Smoked Oak (H2250mm x W900mm x D3mm), £295 each; panel mouldings, from £30 each; bespoke shower enclosure from £1,060; Razor shower pack 3, £575; all Frontline Bathrooms**



## BATHROOM NOTEBOOK

New ideas and expert advice to refresh the look of your room



### LATEST TREND

#### Modern pastels

Duravit's L-Cube range in Apricot Pearl high gloss brings a pretty, feminine edge and the shadow gap around the drawers and under the countertop adds definition. The vanity units are £826 each, Cape Cod washbowls are £308 each and the countertop is £448.

### Super sleek

The latest design innovations make it easy to get a modern look, says Michael Sammon, sales and marketing director at **Frontline Bathrooms**

\* Waterproof panels in realistic 3D faux finishes such as wood and limestone are versatile enough to be used as shower panels, bath panels or half-height wall cladding.

\* The panels are made from 3mm aluminium with an acrylic finish and are lightweight, easy to cut and simple to install.

\* Dark walls can work well in small bathrooms. The vertical grain on our Smoked Oak panels (left) helps to elongate the room and draw the eye upwards.

\* A barely there frameless shower enclosure will make the space feel larger and gives a spa-like luxury finish.

\* Low-profile shower trays create a wet-room look.

\* The floor in a wet room must slope toward the drain, and the room must be waterproof. Use a professional to ensure work is carried out to the required level.

\* Visualise how your design will look with an online 3D planner, which allows products to be placed into a scale model.

### 3 OF A KIND

Keep laundry tucked away in one of these stylish designs



▲ This sturdy and stylish bin has a double, quick-drop lid, removable cotton laundry bag with two compartments and a handy Velcro closure. It comes in either White or Matt Steel. **Selector 55L laundry bin, £81, Brabantia**



▲ Update a bathroom with a colourful, handwoven seagrass basket. It's a generous size (H70cm x 42cm diameter), and the pared-back geometric design will suit both a classic or contemporary scheme. **Geo storage basket, £75, Olli Ella**



▲ Perfect for a bathroom or ensuite, this PVC-coated cotton print bag has a wipe-clean lining and sturdy handles for carrying washing to the machine. **Clouds freestanding laundry bag, £30, Cath Kidston**

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE WHERE TO BUY PAGE

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Dinner will be served in record time with V-ZUG's Combi-Steam MSLQ oven, £4,680



## SMART LIVING

The latest in clever home technology and the most stylish gadgets around



### LATEST TREND

#### Media streaming

Gadgets that make it simple to store and access your media wherever you are in your home are becoming more convenient than ever before. This one – the Acer Revo One RL85, from £239.99 – allows you to play movies and music in high-definition by streaming them to almost any device in the house, and it's also a powerful mini PC.

## Time-saving solutions

**Need everything to be done fast? Look no further...**

**\* Enjoy a speedy supper** The latest ovens with built-in microwaves shorten cooking times dramatically. V-ZUG's Combi-Steam MSLQ oven, £4,680, has a PowerPlus function, which cuts down cooking time by up to one third, while a new range of iQ700 ovens from Siemens, priced around £966, feature varioSpeed tech, which can halve a dish's cooking time. The iQ700 ovens also include an intelligent heating phase allowing dishes that need defrosting to be cooked straight from frozen.

**\* Cut the cleaning** LG's F14U1JBS2 A+++ washing machine has capacity for 10kg of washing so you can pack plenty into one cycle, reducing the number of washes you have to do. Priced £749.99, it also features TurboWash, a new technology that can save 20 minutes a load by combining the spin and rinse cycles, and among its 14 programmes it has a 14-minute quick wash. For floors, the Kobold vacuum cleaner by Vorwerk, £749, is a great option as its SP530 attachment allows you to mop and vacuum hard floors at the same time. Alternatively, a robotic vacuum will do the hard work for you and Vileda's Relax Cleaning Robot, £149.99, is suitable for all hard flooring and short-pile carpet, sweeping and vacuuming edges and under furniture.

**\* Run a bath/shower remotely** Crosswater's latest digital collection gives you convenient control of your bathroom. Using an app on your smartphone or a dedicated remote from up to six metres away, you can run your bath or turn your shower on and warm it up before you step in. Prices start at £1,199 for the Digital Duo Shower.

**\* Make a quick hot drink** A steaming hot water tap that offers filtered hot and cold water will not only save you time, but worktop space too. Insinkerator's 3N1 hot water tap, around £849, even claims to be approximately 20 per cent more energy efficient than a kettle. Smarter has also just launched a Wi-Fi bean-to-cup coffee machine, £149.99, firebox.com, that can be controlled via an iOS or Android app on your smartphone so you can programme it when you're out and have a cuppa waiting for you when you come through the front door.

## 3 OF A KIND Get the inside scoop on these brilliant ice-cream makers



▲ You can whip up ice cream, gelato, frozen yogurt and sorbets within 30 minutes in this machine. It has a 2-litre capacity that can produce up to four pints of ice cream and it includes a *Come Dine With Me* game. **Swan Come Dine With Me ice-cream maker, £59.99, Argos**



▲ This snazzy 1-litre capacity model lets you choose from 12 hardness settings, so you can prepare any kind of ice cream and frozen yogurt. It will then maintain it at the perfect temperature until it's time to serve. **Smart Scoop ice-cream maker from Sage by Heston Blumenthal, £349.95, John Lewis**



▲ An easy-to-navigate LED display makes this design a breeze to use. It has a 1.5-litre capacity and can produce delicious ice cream, sorbet or frozen yogurt in as little as 30 minutes. **Lakeland digital ice-cream maker, £44.99, Lakeland**

# ASK THE EXPERTS

Email [house.beautiful@hearst.co.uk](mailto:house.beautiful@hearst.co.uk) or post your queries  
on our wall at [facebook.com/housebeautifuluk](https://www.facebook.com/housebeautifuluk)

## MEET THE PANEL



**ECO DESIGNER**  
**Oliver Heath**  
TV presenter and expert  
in sustainable design  
from interiors to products



**CLEANING EXPERT**  
**Helen Harrison**  
Home economist and  
former member of the Good  
Housekeeping Institute



**GARDENING**  
**Caroline Tilston**  
Designer at Oak Studio  
Garden Design and writer  
of gardening books

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Include a  
shady spot  
on your patio

## Perfect patio

Our garden is south-facing and we want to lay a patio outside our back door. What materials would you recommend we use, how can we design it so that we can enjoy the patio even when it's really hot and sunny, and how could we furnish it?

### OLIVER HEATH SAYS

An advantage of a south-facing patio is that in the summer you will get all-day sunshine, but in some ways this can also be a disadvantage in that you may experience excess heat build up.

My recommendation would be to build a timber pergola across the south-facing side of your home and train leafy trailing plants over it. In summer the leaves from the plants will shade the patio and even prevent the sun overheating the space inside. By winter, when the leaves fall off, the lower winter sun will be able to

shine through and actually warm the interior areas.

Making the floor level the same inside and out will ease the transition between the two areas. If you use timber decking for the patio, rainwater will flow off the gap between the threshold of the back door and the deck and drain away. With a stone or solid surface, you'll need to fit a channel drain between the two to prevent water flooding into the house.

Furniture for the patio should be water-resistant, but it's even better to buy pieces that can also be stacked and stored away from the excesses of the British weather, or that have weatherproof covers.



Use water and washing-up liquid to clean garden furniture

## Well-watered

We're going on a holiday for a fortnight at the beginning of August and we have a container garden. It's going to be difficult to get people to water the containers on a regular basis, so what can we do before we go to help our plants, flowers and bushes stay watered and refreshed while we're away?

### CAROLINE TILSTON SAYS

Watering is the big issue with container plants in the summer; they dry out much more quickly than plants in the ground and, if you're going away, it can be a real problem. There are three ways to tackle this situation. The first is to try to stop the containers from losing water; if you cluster them together and put them in the shade it will help them to form a mini ecosystem of moisture.

The second method is to increase the amount of accessible water that you



## Furniture refresh

What's the best way to keep my wooden garden furniture looking its best?

### HELEN HARRISON SAYS

When it comes to wood, prevention is better than cure so taking appropriate measures to protect your furniture will help keep it in tip-top condition. Always shelter it from the worst of the elements by keeping it covered with waterproof tarpaulins when not in use and, if you have space, bring it indoors over winter.

Hardwoods such as teak or oak don't usually need preserving before use, but should be wiped over with teak oil once or twice a year to maintain their colour. Soft woods such as pine will need a coat or two of wood preserver, followed by a coat of varnish. Pay attention to areas that come into contact with the ground, such as the bottoms of table and chair legs.

To restore tired-looking wood, remove any mould, dust, lichen or fungi with a scraper or stiff brush. Make up a solution of 50ml washing-up liquid to every three litres of warm water and use a large sponge to wipe all over the surfaces of the wood. Alternatively, you can use a proprietary product such as Ronseal Garden Furniture Cleaner, £9.90 for 750ml, amazon.co.uk (but always test on a small inconspicuous area first). Leave to soak for around 10 minutes, then rinse off taking care not to over-wet the furniture. It's better to choose a sunny day to do this so that the wood can dry as quickly as possible.

Wet cleaning sometimes raises the grain of the wood. If this happens, use fine sandpaper to smooth it back down. Never use pressure washers on wooden furniture as they can damage timber. Finish by lubricating any metal-hinged areas with WD-40 to keep them running smoothly and free of rust.

leave them with. To do this you can put smaller containers on capillary matting or put them in a bigger, waterproof container with water in the bottom. Or you could use water-retaining granules in the compost when you plant them up.

Finally, you can set up a slow watering system. A really low-tech way is to use plastic bottles full of water. Make a very small hole in the bottom and one in the top and then put one end into the soil – the idea is that the water slowly drips out; it may not last the entire two weeks but it all helps. A fancier version of this is a leaky hose system that allows water to seep out slowly and you can get one that has a timer so you can set it to work at the times you'd usually water. Usually, a hose goes from the tap to the containers and also between containers, all joined up by connectors. You can buy it, plus the timer and all the other equipment, at DIY shops and garden centres. Whichever option you choose, the best bit of advice is to set it all up a week or so before you go to make sure it's working properly.

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

# MAKE + MEND

Brush up your skills and gain confidence with our DIY expert Jo Behari

## ABOUT JO



### DIY EXPERT

#### Jo Behari

Founder of Home Jane, the UK's first home improvement company with an all-female workforce



## Sun protection

We need shade in our garden and I'd like to have either a sail shade or a pergola. How easy are they to construct?

If you have lots of high fence posts you can easily create a sail type system with large hooks bolted to the posts. Sail shades have eyelets that allow you to tie a rope and loop it around the hooks. If you don't have a high fence you can use poles as a base. Ikea sells sails that have UV protection, but you can also make your own as there are plenty of places online that sell sail material cut to size.

With concrete fence posts you may need a strong SDS drill to make holes in them for the hooks. You can hire one and the appropriate drill bits from a local tool hire shop.

Having a sail is a nice way to get shade as it can be removed in the

winter months or even on days when you prefer the sun. A pergola, however, is a more permanent option and you can buy one from a hardware store or garden centre. They are made in a variety of styles and materials – for example, willow, wood or metal – and they usually come flatpacked and are quite easy to put together.

If you're green-fingered you can accessorise with some trailing plants, which will create even more shade and a secret garden feel over the years. Do bear in mind that pergolas can be heavy to move and may need some maintenance after harsh winters.

**Find more tips in Jo's book, *The Girl's Guide to DIY* (£12.99, New Holland Publishers)**

## Fitting shutters

Is it possible to put up shutters without the help of an expert?

Shutters can be tricky to get right, but thankfully there are companies that custom-make them to fit your window exactly. I'd also advise getting the shutter company to measure up for you to be sure there are no mistakes.

Most of these companies will provide a fitting service at an additional cost, but if you're on a budget and have some DIY know-how there's no reason you can't do this yourself.

Make space around the window, then lay out all your pieces so you know what order to hang things in. The shutters should come with instructions, but essentially you need to hang the hinges to the frame of the window. It can be tricky to work this out as you have to remember you're working in reverse as the shutters are designed to fold backwards.

Use a small wood bit (about 3mm) to drill pilot holes and then, using the screwdriver attachment on your drill, screw the hinges into the pilot holes. Don't tighten all the screws until you're sure every piece is in place and fits properly. **HB**

**Putting up shutters can be a DIY job**





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# 10 THINGS YOUR BUILDER WISHES YOU KNEW

Get the best possible result  
with this advice from one of  
Britain's top craftsmen

Prepare well,  
whatever your  
dream building  
project is, and it  
will run more  
smoothly

**H**aving an extension added, a loft converted or a new house built to your exact specifications is exciting. But without a good builder it can become a nightmare. Making sure the project goes smoothly takes time, preparation and trust, says Ian Henderson, who runs his family firm, Hende Building Services in Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire. Ian recently won the Federation of Master Builders

Heavenly Builder award for services 'above and beyond the call of duty' when he helped a family with a sick child adapt their home. Here, Ian explains how to find the right builder and how to make your experience with them a heavenly one.

## 1 DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Recommendation is always best or go through a reputable trade organisation such as the Federation of Master Builders (FMB). Ask three or four builders to quote for your job, and find out as much as possible about each one. Ask for references, from the last six months. Good builders want you to know what they are capable of. Ask your builder if you can make contact with their clients and follow this up. I've heard of some people going round and knocking on doors to find out how a builder has got on. A good builder shouldn't be afraid of this. They need to be completely transparent and accountable.

## 2 GIVE A PROPER BRIEF

Before your builder comes, have an honest discussion with your partner about what you want. Some people don't talk about the project in detail with each other and this is frustrating and time-consuming for the builder. It's important to have all the major details agreed in advance, including anything that's not standard. If you want chrome light switches, for example, say so because most builders will price up for standard white plastic. If it's a major project such as an extension, make sure you have a 'good copy' set of plans printed out for the builder to take away and use to price up the job. Ask your architect for four copies of the plans – one for you and three for the different builders you're asking to quote. I take lots of notes – job description, date and time, demolition details, access, brick type required, floors, roof type, door frames and windows.

## 3 DECIDE WHO'S BUYING WHAT

I supply everything in terms of raw materials except tiles, sanitaryware and any specialist things such as door fittings. I'd always ask the client to take control of this aspect. The builder can give you advice and provide brochures for ideas, but you can help by searching out what you like. I'm happy for clients to use my trade accounts at suppliers to order and pay for items. This helps with their budgets, and suppliers can also give them good advice.

## 4 AGREE A CONTRACT AND PLAN OF WORK

As a client you should expect the builder to be thorough and give you as much information about the process of the build as they can. Draw up a contract with clearly defined stages of work. If your builder doesn't offer to do this, ask. If he sounds unsure, then he



An extensive brief is key to getting what you want, advises expert  
Ian Henderson

probably isn't the man for the job. You need to decide the level of professionalism you want. If you pick some random bloke from the pub, then you have to expect drawbacks. The one thing you must agree is a contract stating how long the project will take, with a start date. Be firm about this, then everyone knows where they stand from the beginning.

## 5 THINK ABOUT YOUR PRIORITIES ON A CUSTOM-BUILD PROJECT

Your main priority is knowing what your budget is, and if you want to improve the developer's basic specification, give a lot of thought to where you want to spend it. Don't be tempted to say, 'oh, I love those shiny new kitchen units', and blow all your money on them and then not be able to afford something really useful. Talk to your builder about what it's worth investing in for now and the future and for the way you want to live.

## 6 FIND A MANAGER FOR SELF-BUILDING

Employ the best project manager you can. Of course you could do it yourself, but if you have no experience it's a minefield. Imagine having to get eight reliable and skilled tradesmen – bricklayer, plumber, electrician and more – putting out tenders and getting the best price from them all! Find a builder with excellent and proven project management experience, or engage your architect. You need someone who knows what they're doing.

CONTINUED OVER PAGE



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**you can achieve**  
after a great night's sleep

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The secret to  
a great night's sleep

# 'A thorough quotation agreed at the outset is the greatest tool for you and your builder to work with,' SAYS IAN

## 7 AGREE ON A PRICE

For jobs such as extensions and conversions, the best formula is the square metre rule – generally, build work will cost between £1,000 and £1,500 a square metre, but local factors may affect the price for your project and your level of specification will have a bearing. The basic costs are labour and materials and my profit is on top.

Make sure your quotation is as thorough and detailed as possible, and that you and your builder have explored all possibilities and potential issues so that the costings you agree are correct. If the project hasn't been researched properly, you hit an unexpected snag or you ask for extra things as the job goes along, you'll incur extra cost.

Although it's wise to set aside between five and 10 per cent of your total budget as a contingency fund, a thorough quotation agreed at the outset is the greatest tool for you and your builder to work with.

Agree your payment schedule – I take a deposit, usually in the first week I start a job, to cover demolition and the footings (foundations). Then I take payment at these stages: completion of concrete floor slabs, brickwork, roof timbers, doors and windows, electrical and plumbing work (first fix), plastering, and then the final payment on completion.

## 8 SHARE AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Your builder needs to be insured, but you should also have the correct level of insurance for your home and you should notify your provider that you're having work done. Normally you'd be responsible for getting planning permission and the building regulations fees, then it's the builder's job to liaise with building control at each stage of the process.

It's our job to make sure the work done is safe – that the electrician and gas engineer are qualified, for instance. I give my clients a folder with all the info in to prove that the work has been carried out correctly.

The big thing for clients to be aware of is the new Construction, Design and Management (CDM) health and safety regulations that will affect the domestic market. Although full details are still emerging, it will involve clients having to work with their builder to ensure the site meets health and safety standards.

## 9 BE AVAILABLE DURING WORKING HOURS

You're spending a lot of money, so it's important to be available for questions that arise during working hours and to come and see how the job's coming along during daylight hours – it's impossible to take a proper look at a project in the dark.

## 10 AGREE WHAT YOU EXPECT

At the pre-contract meeting I go through the working hours, times and length of lunch and tea breaks, and whether we'll do weekend work. It's good to discuss what happens in bad weather. Clients have to understand that in wet or cold there are certain things we can't do, such as laying concrete and anything mortar-based. It can also be dangerous to work in high winds, heavy snow and rain for visibility and use of electrical equipment. On a bad weather day, we may go and work on another indoor job. If this involves a process that takes more than a day, it could put us behind on your job. I'd ask clients for a certain amount of flexibility and understanding on this. Go through the detail of the stages of the build so you get the big picture and agree what access is needed to your house. We supply our own portable toilets, I have an external socket fitted before I start and I also fit an outside tap. Don't feel obliged to keep making tea – but a cuppa goes a long way towards a happy builder/client relationship! **HB**

● For information on the House Beautiful collection of custom-built modular homes, see page 64



Ian points out that good builders want you to know about their work, so won't be shy about references

## What makes Ian 'heavenly'?

**Ian Henderson, 49, started out in the building trade as a carpenter/joiner. Over the years he's become highly experienced and qualified in all aspects of building work.**

\* He won the Heavenly Builder award for his work with the Austin family from Cheadle Hulme. Dave and Becky Austin needed an extension to their three-bedroom 1930s semi to provide safe and flexible living accommodation for their two-year-old daughter Emilie, who'd been diagnosed with hepatoblastoma, a form of liver cancer. In particular they wanted an open-plan kitchen and lounge so Becky could keep a close eye on her daughter as she cooked.

\* The Austins emptied their bank account and borrowed from family but still couldn't raise enough funds for the work, so Ian agreed to do the job for them at cost price, pulling in huge favours from trade contacts for materials. He negotiated a special price for the skip hire, a firm in Scotland donated timber, and his crew put in extra hours for nothing. Ian even replastered and redecorated Emilie's bedroom for free and sorted out a condensation problem. Working through the night meant everything was ready for the family's return home from hospital.

\* 'He went beyond the call of duty,' says Dave. 'I'm in the interiors business and I've come across a lot of builders. Ian is above the rest.'

- For more about the Federation of Master Builders, visit [fmb.org.uk](http://fmb.org.uk). To choose a master builder registered with them, visit [housebeautiful.co.uk](http://housebeautiful.co.uk) and use our Find A Builder service
- Contact Ian's company on 0161 439 4709; [hende.co.uk](http://hende.co.uk)

# LIVING WELL

Practical and planet-friendly products for your home



1



2



3

## THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Enjoy alfresco fun in the sun with this stylish ecofriendly picnicware

### 1 COUNTRY FILE

Give your picnic a rustic look with these smart and practical food boxes. Made from FSC-certified cardboard they're biodegradable and leak-resistant, great for crunchy salads, coleslaw and cake. Forks are sold separately.

**Kraft boxes (H6cm x W10.5cm x L12.5cm), 35p each, Candle & Cake**

### 2 ASIAN DELIGHT

An essential part of Indian daily life, stackable tiffin lunchboxes are a great way to transport more than just sandwiches to your picnic without spills. The Lolita has three compartments and is made from enamelware handpainted in Kashmir. **Lolita Tiffin (H23cm x 16cm dia), £27.97, Nkuku**

### 3 FAST GROWTH

Disposable products aren't usually very ecofriendly, but bamboo plates and cutlery are better than most. Bamboo is incredibly fast growing and the three-ply designs can be re-used before they're recycled.

**Veneerware plates and cutlery, from £6.50 for eight 18cm plates, Green Tulip**

THREE WE LOVE

## LIGHTER NIGHTS

Plan low-energy illumination into your garden design



### BESPOKE OFFERINGS

Chester-based Garden Lighting by Design works nationwide and offers a comprehensive service to help you make the most of your garden all year round. Whether you want to stay outside longer in summer, illuminate a path for safety or help to enhance your planting, even in mid-winter, it can offer solutions. **Pricing varies, Garden Lighting By Design**

### SUN LAMPS

Both the technology and the styles of outdoor lighting have improved vastly over the years and you can now create a sophisticated garden lighting scheme without running cables from the house. The Solar Centre stocks a huge number of solar-powered options from fairy lights and spots to outdoor LEDs.

**Canterbury Solar Wall light, £19.99, The Solar Centre**

### BY DESIGN

If your garden is having a makeover, London-based Moonlight Design could work alongside your contractors to create a lighting scheme. Or you can order items ranging from ornate lanterns to LED lighting strips from their online shop. **Hunza adjustable spike spots (above), £85 each, Moonlight Design**



## 60 seconds on... STAYING SAFE FROM CO FUMES

**Lives can be saved, says Gail van Dijk, Plumb Center's campaign manager for Make CO Alarms Law**

### Tell us about your carbon monoxide campaign...

For years, Plumb Center has encouraged installers to follow best practice and fit CO alarms with any fuel-burning appliance installation. This year, after consultation with the heating industry, we decided this wasn't sufficient and a new law to protect homes and businesses nationwide was needed.

### Is carbon monoxide really that dangerous?

It's a silent killer. You can't see, taste or smell it and symptoms like headaches, nausea and dizziness can be confused with flu. Each year sees 40 recorded fatalities in England and Wales. More than 4,000 people attend A&E with symptoms that may lead to brain damage and strokes.

**The Government has just announced that it's going to be mandatory for all private landlords to have CO alarms fitted. You must be delighted?**

Yes, but it should go further to protect everyone in rented accommodation, private homes and at work.

**How do leaks occur and what can homeowners do to protect themselves?**

CO poisoning can happen if your appliance is not

functioning correctly. If it's poorly installed, or hasn't been serviced regularly, it poses a risk. This can be exacerbated if there's not enough fresh air in the room or your chimney or flue gets blocked. Have your appliances serviced regularly by a qualified engineer, and get an alarm installed as a vital second line of defence.

### What are the symptoms of this poisoning?

Headaches, tiredness, dizziness, nausea, confusion, persistent chest or stomach pains, trembling and blurred vision. And while high levels of CO can kill in minutes, low levels can have devastating effects and are potentially fatal over a long period.

### Where's the best place to fit a CO alarm?

Leave it to the professionals, who should always fit an alarm in accordance with manufacturers' instructions. It's best to install an alarm in all rooms where there's a carbon-burning appliance. Carbon monoxide rises until it hits the ceiling, then slowly sinks. The alarm should be above head height so it's activated before it reaches you.

● Visit [myplumbcenter.co.uk/co](http://myplumbcenter.co.uk/co)

**BACK TO NATURE**  
Discover the latest in natural products from beauty treatments to greener gardening at the Love Natural Love Organic fair at Olympia, London, 3-5 July. Tickets, £7.50 in advance, £10 on the door, [lnlo.co.uk](http://lnlo.co.uk)



## Natural shades

Restore wooden decking and garden furniture to their original colour with the Osmo Wood Reviver Power Gel. Paint it on, leave for at least 30 minutes and the deep penetrating action will bring back the colour, £3.70 for 500ml, £34.40 for 2.5L, [osmouk.com](http://osmouk.com).

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

## BUYER'S GUIDE

## ALLOTMENT ENVY

Get growing with gorgeous and practical garden essentials

**GONE TO SEED**

Caroline Gardner's new range of gardening products includes this pretty seed tin (H14cm x W11cm x D11cm), £12, and matching gloves

**UNDER COVER**

Not just a lovely feature, this delicate wirework cloche from Sophie Conran keeps the birds at bay too, £16.95, Annabel James

**ALL CHANGE**

Tools from the Wolf Garten's Multi Change range clip into the same universal handle. Rakes, cultivators, seed sowers etc, from £14.99 each

**WOOD LOOKS**

This stylish trowel and fork set in solid ash and stainless steel is finished in uplifting pastel green, £19.95, Not the Usual

**DOUBLE DUTY**

Replace your water butt with the Cascata terracotta coloured urn design with 245L capacity. It doubles as a planter too, £189.99, Crocus

**HOT HOUSE**

Fruit and veg get year-round warmth with this cold frame made from FSC acacia wood (L80cm), £119.99, Crocus (also Waitrose)

**TWITTER TALK**

Use your imagination and you can upcycle virtually anything says Donna Fenn, founder of Remade in Britain

**@HB: What's the appeal of upcycling?**

**@Remade:** By turning discarded items into objects of higher quality and value, you get sustainable original designs you can't find on the high street

**@HB: It's becoming more mainstream now, isn't it?**

**@Remade:** People are getting tired of the throwaway culture and looking for unique furnishings that are ecofriendly

**@HB: How does Remade in Britain work and why did you set it up?**

**@Remade:** I saw that there wasn't a site where my upcycling friends could sell everything from teacup candles to grand piano bookcases so I set one up

**@HB: What's your favourite product on the site now?**

**@Remade:** A sofa from Phoenix Antiques Barn. It was upcycled from a vintage vaulting horse – showing how unique and individual products can be!

**@HB: What advice can you give to someone looking to have a go at upcycling?**

**@Remade:** Let your imagination run free. Experimenting and just having a go is the best tip

**@HB: Do you have any pointers on where to find the best salvage furniture?**

**@Remade:** I think if people looked in their garage or attic they'd find a multitude of objects they could try and upcycle. Give it a go!

● **Find out more at [remadeinbritain.com](http://remadeinbritain.com)** HB

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE **WHERE TO BUY** PAGE



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# A ROOM OUTSIDE

**A summerhouse became a studio when a new business outgrew the kitchen table.**

Caroline Borgman, 38, lives in a stone cottage in West Oxfordshire with her husband Anthony, 40, and their two children Amelie and Felix. When they bought the house in 2007 they used the summerhouse as storage and an office for the family, but when Caroline launched her interior design business in 2013 it was transformed into a smart studio.

CONTINUED OVER NEXT PAGE

## WALLS

**The white and grey scheme enhances the feeling of space while the ladder stores and displays Caroline's fabrics**



## FLOOR

**A lick of light grey paint has revived the wooden floor**



**SHELVING**  
White cubbyhole units were chosen so they blend into the background



### BEFORE



### ACTION PLAN

CLEAR THE SPACE

PAINT WALLS AND THE WOODEN FLOOR

FIT IN STREAMLINED STORAGE

MAKE A BESPOKE WORKSTATION



Glazed double doors mean the summerhouse office is filled with light

'Having a dedicated studio for my work makes it so much easier for me to file and find things, and also gives me the opportunity to display my designs,' SAYS CAROLINE

#### What made you transform the summerhouse?

Anthony and I always said that one day it would become my studio – it was just a matter of when. Before we had children I was a ladieswear fashion buyer for a UK high-street chain, then while taking time out for the kids I studied interior design. After overseeing the renovation of our house, I found that friends were asking for help with their interior design projects and I soon realised that with all the samples, fabric, moodboards and paint pots, I needed my own studio. I had outgrown the kitchen table and I knew the summerhouse would give me somewhere big enough to work.

#### How did you decide to use the space?

It's not huge but I knew it could be bright and practical. I wanted it to be a calm as well as an inspiring place – it has such a lovely view of the garden which, was a good start. A large table that could double up as a sewing space and a workstation was key, and it had to have room for a printer too. I started sketching ideas and soon realised I needed something bespoke. As I was on a tight budget I challenged Anthony with the task and I'm delighted with the result!

#### Tell us about the transformation...

We sanded the wooden flooring, which had become very worn, then finished it off with a grey floor paint. It's a really cost-effective way of updating a less-than-perfect surface. I love grey – it's a very forgiving colour that's a perfect base for many schemes. Then we painted the walls white. Lighting was a key element; we fitted enough spotlights to give a soft light directed towards the new shelving that's also good enough for my detailed work. As a lovely extra we also cleared the garden in front of the double doors and Anthony fitted decking to create a sitting area for sunny days.

#### So your ideas worked out as planned

Originally I intended to have the table built against one wall. I'm so pleased I changed my mind and put it in the middle of the room because it's so much more practical to be able to walk around three sides, especially when I'm working with large pieces of fabric. Clients can sit with me at the table too.

#### Describe your working day

If I'm having a paperwork day, I just plug in my laptop and work solidly. If it's a creative day, I clear the table so I can use the worktop as a cutting and sewing space and there's enough room for me to manoeuvre when I'm putting together client moodboards. I also use the desktop for painting pieces of furniture I'm upcycling. It's so much better discussing design projects with my clients in my studio as it portrays a professional, organised service.

#### Is the office cold in winter?

It's a very sturdy structure made of breeze block clad in wood and it has a pitched slate roof so is completely weatherproof. I use a portable storage heater for extra-cold days, but the majority of the time I'm very comfortable working in there. The only thing I now need to invest in is a good coffee machine!

#### What are you most pleased with?

I'm delighted with the flexibility of the space and love the shelving, my large workstation and the quality of light that fills the room. My clients say it's an attractive space and are happy to call in for a coffee and discuss their requirements. I also feel lucky to have a creative husband who always manages to translate my vision perfectly! 

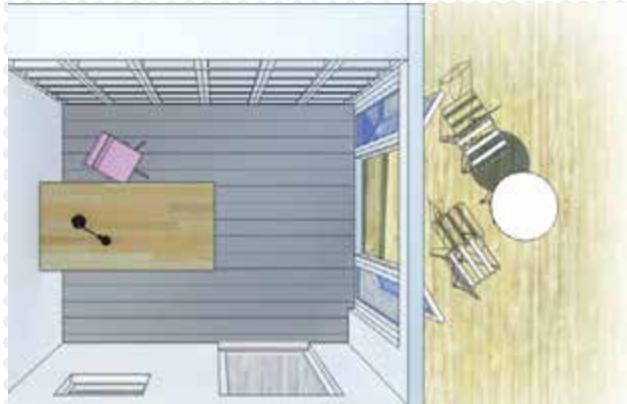
● Contact Caroline Borgman Interiors on 0788 513 6728 or [carolineborgman.co.uk](http://carolineborgman.co.uk)

## IN DETAIL



## THE NEW LAYOUT

A wall of storage leaves plenty of space for the workstation



## GET THE LOOK



Raw oak **towel ladder**  
(H170cm), £118,  
English Abode



Gregor **swivel chair**  
in White, £75, Ikea



Raffia embroidered bird  
**storage boxes**, from  
£30 each, Berry Red

## WHAT IT COST

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Wall paint .....                        | £25           |
| Flooring, sanding<br>and painting ..... | £78           |
| Shelving .....                          | £300          |
| Lighting .....                          | £200          |
| Workstation .....                       | £80           |
| Chair .....                             | £100          |
| Decking .....                           | £300          |
| <b>Total</b> .....                      | <b>£1,083</b> |

## SHOPPING LIST

**Walls** painted in Dulux Pure Brilliant White matt emulsion, £25 for 10L, B&Q. Purbeck Stone **floor paint**, £58 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball. **Shelving unit** made from a selection of Kallax shelving units, from £30 each; Pjäs **wicker storage baskets**, £13 each; **white boxes** and **magazine files**, from a selection; all Ikea. Handmade grey **pigeonhole shelving unit**, £95; floral **cushion**, £30; grey **lamp base with shade**, £45; **pinboard**, £40; **bag**, from a selection; all Caroline Borgman Interiors. For similar **ladder**, try The Orchard Home and Gifts. For similar bistro **table and chair set**, try John Lewis. For similar **desk lamp**, try Anglepoise. For similar **phone**, try Amazon

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**SPACE SAVER**  
No room for an office? The **Birdie** wall-mounted desk will fit into even the tiniest area, £295, Loaf



**PAPER PILE**  
Two generous drawers take foolscap files in the **Country White** wooden filing cabinet, £289, Hampshire Furniture



**POST IT**  
A pretty way to store correspondence, the **White Flora** letter rack with removable divider is just £3.99 from Dunelm

## Office CHIC

Create the ideal set up for a spot of home working with our brilliant buys



**CARRY ON**  
Office supplies will always be to hand in this box, which also has a handy slide-out tray. **Toto** storage caddy, £30, Store



**TOP DRAWER**  
Keep bills sorted in the Bisley **5 multidrawer unit** – it will fit on most desks, £70, John Lewis



**BRIGHT IDEA**  
This blue **Peg** noticeboard, £39, Clare Loves, will brighten up any workspace – it comes in a sunny yellow too



**ADD ON**  
Up the storage on the **Beckworth** desk, £399, with this matching desk top, £249; both Marks & Spencer

# BRING THE INSIDE OUT

A designer's skill transformed an awkward, sloping plot into a stunning space. Debbie Cotter, 47, and her husband Wayne, 50, bought their four-bedroom detached home in Kent from a developer. The house was perfect but the garden needed attention.



An extra-large parasol covers the sofa area, protecting it from the sun and creating the feel of a garden room. Downlighters on the screening mean Debbie and Wayne can sit out in the evenings



### **What were your first impressions of the garden?**

There was just a large, sloping muddy patch. While the house was perfect for us we knew the garden would be a challenge. The developer had laid a patio across the width of the back of the house, then a low wall had been built to hold back the earth, which had been planted with grass seeds to create a lawn.

### **Had you any ideas for the garden?**

It sounds simple but our main aim was to have a garden we could use – where we could create areas to sit and relax in and entertain family and friends. We weren't bothered about having a large lawn but it had to be easily accessible from both sets of French doors. Originally there were just a few stone steps at the side of the garden that were just about lost in the mud.

### **So you were keen to make a start...**

As we didn't know where to begin, we decided to get some professional help from a garden designer. Wayne and I did some research and came across a company's website showing projects they'd done that we really liked, especially some with white rendered walls. When the company owner paid us a visit we were bursting with different ideas and he was able to interpret them and tell us what was possible and what wasn't. His key suggestion was to cut heavily into the sloping ground to create a large, level mid-section with space for seating and entertaining areas.

### **The excavation work must have been a problem**

It would have been a nightmare if we didn't have a side entrance but the landscapers were able to get a micro digger through to the back of the house and get materials and excavations in and out. We had skip after skip at the front of the house to remove all of the earth.

### **Tell us about the hard landscaping**

The combination of white rendered walls with wood appealed to us and our design included a Balau hardwood decked space that has become an informal seating area with our weatherproof rattan sofas. The decking was laid to span the width of the two French doors to make the garden feel like an extension of the house and is interspersed with sections of sawn granite paving. Decking was used again in the circular seating area at the top of the garden, with rows of tumbled granite setts to define the space.

### **How did you plan the lighting?**

Good lighting was key as we wanted to be able to use the garden in the evenings. There are four zones in which the lights can switch on and off independently via a remote control – the pergola and walls, the floor and up the steps, in the water feature, and uplighters among the plants. We can vary the options depending on whether we're having a party or I'm sitting out here with a glass of wine and a book.

### **Talk us through the planting**

We wanted a low-maintenance scheme that complements the garden's contemporary style. I visited a garden centre with Chris Benson, the garden designer, to look at plants and we chose a palette of whites, greens, purples and blues that gives interest at different times of the year. The *Buxus* balls and topiary create year-round structure. We picked bamboo and ornamental grasses for movement and screening, and perennials such as *heuchera*, *agapanthus* and *salvia* for colour. Other evergreen plants including *Fatsia japonica* and *phormiums* were selected for their architectural form and interest, and I particularly like the tall lollipop bay trees, which look great lit up at night.

### **Did you ask for a water feature to be included?**

Yes, I love the sound of running water – it's so relaxing. A stainless-steel blade-style fountain has been set into one of the retaining walls, flowing onto Scottish cobbles and a pool of shallow water below. The cobbles can also be found in some of the planting areas, to add texture and soften the hard lines of the decking and paving.

● Contact Chris Benson at **The Landscape Design Studio** on 01732 843542; [thelandscapedesignstudio.com](http://thelandscapedesignstudio.com)



CONTINUED OVER PAGE



## IN DETAIL

Riviera free arm **parasol**, £129, Dobbies Garden Centre



Richmond three-seat synthetic **rattan sofa**, £399, Wovenhill



St Mawes **teak pot**, £55, Garden Trading

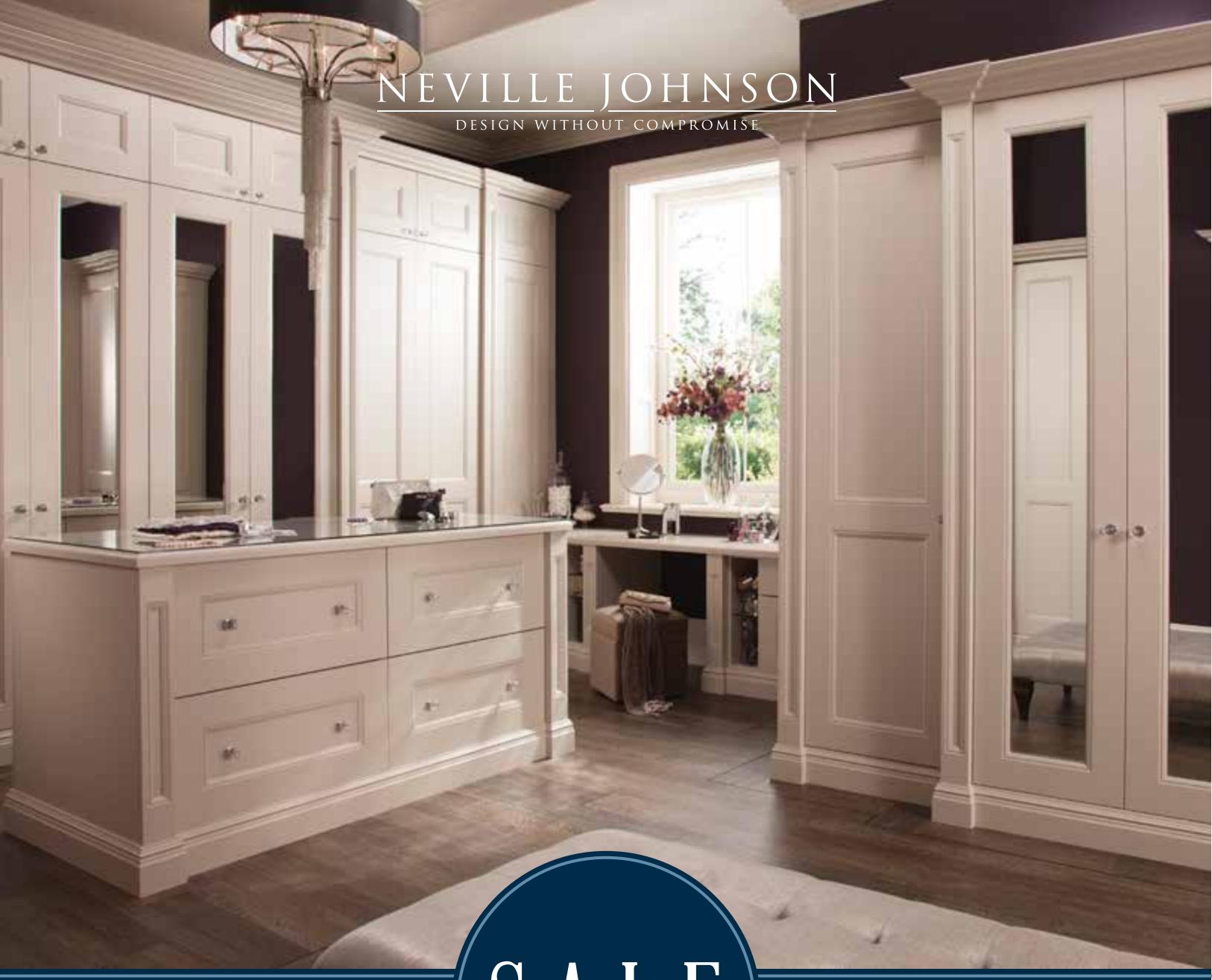
## SHOPPING LIST

Pergola and wood above wall painted in Silver Birch **Woodstain** from the Garden Shades range, Cuprinol, £13.24 for 1L. Round **sofa**, two **armchairs** and small **table**, £399, Woodstock. Mercury 3.5m x 3m rectangular cantilevered **parasol and base** in Natural, £895, Westminster Furniture. Stainless-steel Flame tower **patio heater**, £299, Calor

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE WHERE TO BUY PAGE

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#### ASTRAL INDICATOR

With a sandblasted finish, the **Rusty Star**, £50, Cox and Cox, would look great in a traditional setting or on a modern deck



#### ON THE CURVE

Unusual shining circles make a perfect finishing touch to a contemporary garden. **Swirl steel sculpture** (H52cm), £55, Next



#### STAGE DRESSING

Decorate branches for a summer garden party. **Chinese lanterns**, £4.99 for three, Lakeland



#### ITALIAN STYLE

Based on the ancient Bocca della Verità in Rome, this **stone mask** can be used as a wall plaque (64cm x 64.7cm), £295, Haddonstone

# Garden ART

Movable and permanent outdoor decorations create focal points and highlights



#### NIGHTLIGHTS

Add pretty candlelight to a patio. **Wicker lantern** (H30cm), £29.95, The Swedish Wooden Horse Company



#### CLASSICAL ELEGANCE

This round honed slate shape works as a slim vase indoors or out. **Foras Caviara 50 sculpture** on a slate plinth, £394, John Lewis



#### ON REFLECTION

Position these stainless-steel **mirror spheres** (6.5cm-27cm dia) on gravel or in flowerbeds, £44.99, Tesco Direct



#### LOOK EAST

Jungly greenery is a perfect environment for this **Buddha head**, which brings a note of Zen-like calm; £18, by Sainsbury's

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE **WHERE TO BUY** PAGE



Doris



Cranmere Pool



Fuchsia 'Pink Fizz'



Grans Favourite



Laced Monarch



Gardenia 'Kleims Hardy'



Hydrangea 'Love'

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**OFFER 3 Gardenia 'Kleims Hardy'** This can be grown outdoors all year round. Its glossy evergreen foliage provides the perfect backdrop for the exquisite blooms in summer. A beautiful, compact shrub for sheltered borders and containers. H90cm. Buy one 9cm potted plant for £12.99 or three for £24.98.

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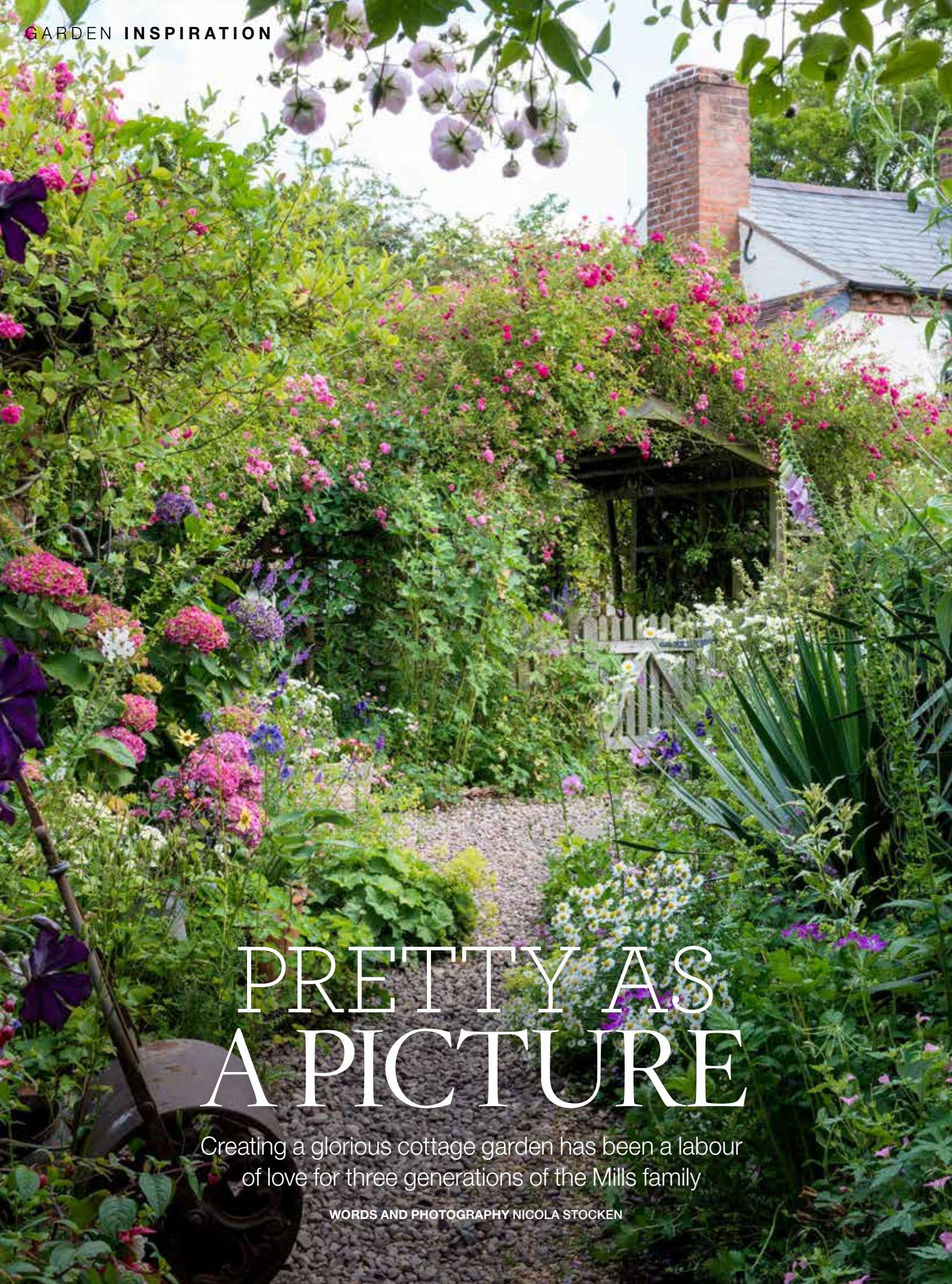
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|                |   | Price         | Qty          | Total                           |
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| TCK55702B      | 2 Hydrangea 'Love' Powerline plug plants  | £12.98        |              |                                 |
| TCA10521       | 1 Gardenia 'Kleims Hardy' 9cm potted plant  | £12.99        |              |                                 |
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# PRETTY AS A PICTURE

Creating a glorious cottage garden has been a labour of love for three generations of the Mills family

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY NICOLA STOCKEN



A pebbly path winds through the mixed borders bursting with colourful planting



Val with her daughter Dawn and granddaughter Clarrie tying up a *Clematis* 'Rouge Cardinal'

The mention of a cottage garden instantly conjures up romantic images of billowing borders spilling over with fragrant flowers, set against a backdrop of birdsong and softly buzzing bees. It's the scene that greets Val Mills every morning. 'I've always loved cottage gardens, and the first thing I do when I get up is look out on mine,' says Val, a dress designer and christening gown embroiderer. 'There's hardly a day I don't venture into it.' She created the garden with her late husband David, a builder, around their 1830s semi-detached cottage in Worcestershire. It was no overnight wonder though, rather a gradual evolution over decades, as Val explains...

#### TEAM EFFORT

Initially, neither Dave nor I knew much about gardening but we learned as we went along. And it hasn't been without its challenges. The soil here is very heavy clay, but it's been greatly improved with the addition of farmyard manure and homemade compost. Now when visitors see the lovely black soil they say how lucky I am – they wouldn't believe the solid clay that lies not far beneath, but then that's why roses grow so well here.

It was a different story when we moved here 40 years ago with our two daughters, Dawn, then 12,

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**Spectacular Rosa 'Belvedere'** clammers over a pergola spanning colourful borders



A rustic wooden arch between borders of *Phygelius*, *cosmos* and *penstemon*



Runner beans grow up hazel supports in the raised vegetable bed

and Sheryl, eight. There was no running water in the cottage so while we waited for approval for an improvement grant we started work on the garden. It had become completely overgrown and little survived after we'd finished – just some apple trees. At the time, David had a passion for heathers and dwarf conifers but they grew huge and had to be removed. He also loved delphiniums, so as the borders evolved he grew more and more of them.

### EVOLVING STYLE

Until 20 years ago when I retired, my daughter Dawn and I ran a wedding dress shop, designing and making gowns, so it was David who spent most time in the garden. He loved the lawns but, bit by bit, as the borders grew larger, the lawns shrank. Being just about south facing, the main border is perfect for traditional cottage plants such as roses, delphiniums, hardy geraniums, phlox and bellflowers.

Another plant I love is the pink *Sidalcea* or prairie mallow, which we first saw in Wales running wild round a riverside cottage. It spreads all over the place, but I love the spontaneity of self-spreading plants. I also grow aconites, which most people avoid because they're poisonous, but I just make sure to wear gloves when I'm handling them. Then, for late summer colour, I've added phlox, penstemons and daisy-like leucanthemums to the mix.

The main border is largely creams, pinks, white and purples, apart from one yellow flag iris, which I allow because it's over by the time

the border peaks. However I love yellow in spring when the daffodils come. That's the time to place plant supports in the borders. I bend galvanised wire pig netting into circles to place around clumps of perennials just as the leaves are coming. At first it looks ugly, but plants soon grow through the netting and you can't see it at all.

Over the years I've gained many beautiful plants by exchanging with other people, but I don't know the varieties of half of them. One of the first was *Geranium x magnificum*, a hardy geranium with pretty blue flowers. Then I established *Geranium psilostemon*: it has shocking pink flowers and clammers over other plants, seeding everywhere. Most recently came *Geranium 'Rozanne'*, which flowers all summer long. Everyone loves hardy geraniums and I wouldn't be without them. They're the glue that holds a border together.

### ARCHES, PATHS AND PLANTS

I grow a lot from cuttings, not only taken here but also from friends' gardens. That's how I got my original 'Belvedere' rambling rose that I planted against the house – not realising it would grow so quickly it blocked the windows! Since then 'Belvedere' is restricted to arches and mixes beautifully with the purple *Clematis 'Étoile Violette'*. Clematis don't do as well here as I think they should, apart from *viticella*. I love arches and it seems such a waste not having climbers. The newest arch is near the shed, which was a cast-off from my brother and came here in three pieces. It's definitely my last arch!



## VINTAGE ORNAMENTS

Over the years we've collected a lot of old implements and vintage items that we leave out in the garden and they fit in well with the flowers. David often came home with throwaway items such as the cast-iron ends to our long wooden bench – he simply cut new wood slats and fitted it. Then there's a rusty plough, a tennis court line marker and a big old lawn roller adding to the ancient troughs, watering cans, a chair and chimney pots that Sheryl has brought me.

The garden never stops changing and evolving. I've recently built a potager but the bottom part has proved to be too shady to grow anything except carrots and raspberries, so now I'm building another bed nearer the shed for beans and potatoes. We were virtually self-sufficient when David grew all the vegetables, and I'm now going to take that task on with the help of my granddaughter Clarrie, 18, who's learning to grow plants. It looks as though she'll be carrying on the family tradition.

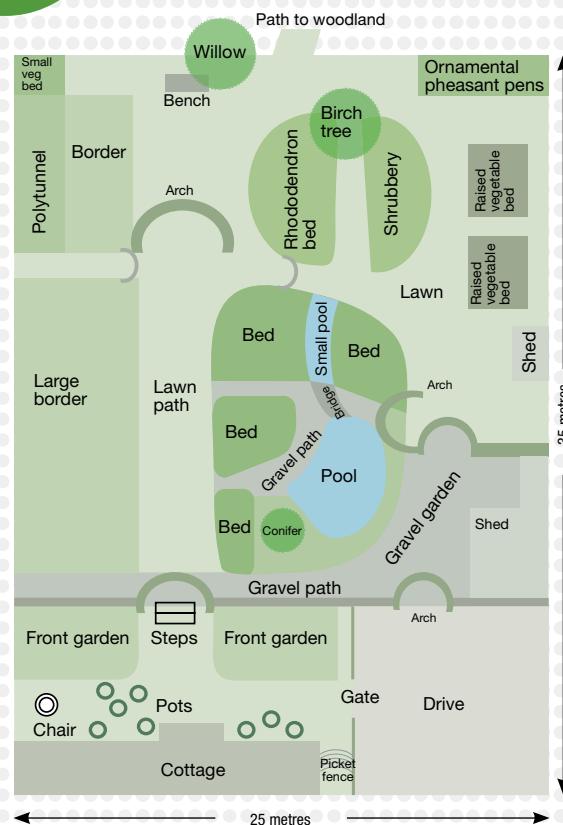
Even though this garden peaks in midsummer, it never sleeps. Last winter was so mild I was out there working nearly every day. After my family, the garden is my life. **HB**

**● The garden at Highfield Cottage opens on 20 and 21 June (11am-6pm), [wichenfordopengardens.com](http://wichenfordopengardens.com); and on 28 June and 5 July (2-6pm) under the National Gardens Scheme, [ngs.org.uk](http://ngs.org.uk). On weekday summer evenings, groups of 12 or more can visit by prior appointment. Call 01886 888473**

## IN DETAIL

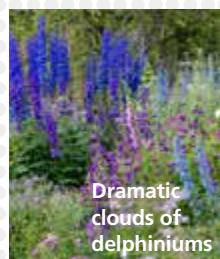
### The layout

Lawn and gravel paths divide the garden into a number of separate areas



### Get the cottage garden look

- ★ Lay winding pebble or gravel paths, allowing plants to flop over and self-seeders to take hold.
- ★ Heavy summer rains can flatten borders, so in spring prepare stakes for tall plants and supports for mid-height bushy perennials.
- ★ Add height with standard roses, clematis on obelisks and bay or miniature fruit trees.
- ★ Keep wooden gates, pergolas and arches simple, with traditional designs.
- ★ Use ornaments sparingly, choosing salvaged items, terracotta pots or weathered stone bird baths or sundials. Hasten lichen growth with coats of live goat's milk yogurt.
- ★ Or build paths from reclaimed bricks laid lengthways with wide enough cracks for moss to creep in.
- ★ Stake and water in the growing season; cut back and mulch in autumn; and minimise weeding with ground-covering perennials.
- ★ Once every few years dig up and split congested clumps of perennials to keep them healthy.



**COOK'S TOWER**

A serious investment that doesn't take up too much space, the **Premium** wood-fired oven (H190cm) bakes pizzas and bread as well as roasting meat and fish, £799.99, Lakeland

**TRADITIONAL DISH**

The **Kadai** fire bowl and stand (H66cm) has a large grill area for cooking. It's made from wrought cast-iron and costs £220 from Garden Trading

**MOVABLE FEAST**

Raise or lower the grill to vary the heat, and use the lid and air vent to control the temperature. **Big Green Egg** ceramic charcoal barbecue (H98cm), £750, John Lewis

**STYLISH CHOICE**

**Uuni2** wood-fired pizza baker (H50cm) is neat, good looking and fast. Just use wood pellets as fuel. The unit dismantles to pack away easily, £189, Uuni

# Smoking HOT!

Enjoy cooking outdoors whether you want to serve up a simple dish or a feast

**MULTITASKER**

**Bar-Be-Quick** Smoker Grill (H87cm) is a charcoal barbecue and grill that will also steam, roast and smoke. It has a separate base pan for easy set-up, £75, Wilko

**GEOMETRIC RUSTIC**

**The Outdoor Fireplace** with woodstore and grill (H182cm) are all in one stylish weathered metal stand. There's a cubby for firelighters and a tray for ash, £599, Store

**FAST FOOD**

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**SHINING EXAMPLE**

For the serious barbecue, the **Prestige PRO 665** has five main burners, integrated woodchip burner and infrared sizzle zone for searing food, £3,050, Napoleon Grills

# TIME FOR A TREAT

Nothing beats an ice-cool dessert on a hot summer's day and this irresistibly luscious creation is sure to impress friends and family



## GET AHEAD

\* If you have time, make this torte a day in advance to give it plenty of time to set properly.

**S**ix simple ingredients are all it takes to put together this scrumptious dessert that oozes wow factor. We've chosen raspberries but you could use any combination of sensational summer berries such as strawberries, blueberries or blackberries. Then take your pick from Carte D'Or's mouthwatering ice cream flavours including Chocolate Inspiration, Crema Di Mascarpone, Eton Mess, Caffe Latte, Salted Caramel and Blueberry & Vanilla. Be as imaginative as you like!

## Carte D'Or ice cream summer berry torte

### SERVES 12

**Oil**, to grease

**50g unsalted butter**

**300g milk chocolate digestives**

**2 x 900ml Carte D'Or Gelateria in your favourite flavour**  
(we used Carte D'Or Gelateria Chocolate Inspiration)

**Fresh summer berries, to serve**

**Icing sugar, to dust**

**1** Grease and line the base of a 20.5cm round loose-bottom cake tin with baking parchment.

**2** In a medium pan melt the butter. Remove from heat. In a food processor, whizz the biscuits to fine crumbs. Tip into the pan and stir with the butter to coat. Press mixture into the bottom of the prepared cake tin. Chill for 20min or until set.

**3** Scoop the delicious ice cream into a large bowl and mash lightly with a wooden spoon. Transfer to tin and smooth the surface. Freeze for 4 hours or until firm.

**4** To serve, run a hot knife around the edge of the torte and carefully release from the cake tin. Pile fresh summer berries on top and lightly dust with icing sugar.



Carte D'Or Gelateria Chocolate Inspiration has been awarded the Good Housekeeping Institute Approved endorsement. Visit [cartedorsoop.co.uk](http://cartedorsoop.co.uk) to find out more

# A TASTE OF SUMMER

Fresh and full of flavour, these quick and healthy dishes are perfect for sharing alfresco

## Fig, rocket and Gorgonzola salad with toasted almonds and maple dressing

**SERVES 4**

**FOR THE DRESSING**

1tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice  
1tbsp maple syrup  
2tbsp olive oil  
Pinch of salt  
**FOR THE SALAD**  
30g flaked almonds  
6 ripe figs, sliced

100g rocket

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper  
40g Gorgonzola cheese, torn into pieces

- 1 Whisk all the dressing ingredients together in a small bowl and set aside.
- 2 Put the almonds in a dry

non-stick frying pan and toast over a medium heat for a few minutes, until golden but not too dark brown. Transfer to a bowl.

- 3 Lay figs and rocket on a salad plate, toss with the dressing and season.
- 4 Scatter Gorgonzola and almonds on top and serve.

**COOK'S NOTE**

\* Figs are naturally sweet, so they work best mixed with bold ingredients such as peppery rocket, salty blue cheese and a simple dressing.



## Warm salad of roasted aubergine and broccoli with anchovy lemon dressing

SERVES 2

### FOR THE SALAD

1 medium aubergine  
Extra virgin olive oil  
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp sea salt  
1tsp dried red chilli flakes

Half a head of broccoli  
2 handfuls of baby  
spinach leaves

### FOR THE DRESSING

Juice of  $\frac{1}{2}$  a lemon  
2tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
Splash of Tabasco  
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp honey  
1tsp tahini  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  a small tin of anchovies  
in olive oil, chopped  
Handful of flat-leaf parsley,  
finely chopped  
Sea salt and freshly ground  
black pepper

**1** Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan, gas mark 4). Slice the aubergine into hearty rounds (about 2-3cm thick). In a bowl, coat the aubergine in the olive oil, salt and chilli flakes, then lay them onto a flat baking tray and place in the hot oven for 10min.

**2** In the meantime, cut the florets of broccoli off the stalk, reserving the stalk and any leaves, as these can be roasted too. Cut the florets into bite-sized pieces. People tend to throw the stalk away, but it's actually just as tasty as the rest of this brassica if you get to the tender inside bit. Cut off the rough end of the stalk and peel with a knife until you get to the tender pale bit inside. Slice into 2cm thick rectangles.

**3** After the aubergine has cooked for 10min, remove the tray from the oven and turn the

rounds over. Place the broccoli stalks, florets and leaves in a roasting tray, toss with salt, pepper and olive oil and place in the oven with the aubergine for 15-20min, until the aubergine is soft and golden brown and the broccoli is tinged brown. You may need to remove the leaves early to avoid them burning.

**4** To make the dressing, combine the lemon juice, olive oil, Tabasco, honey and tahini in a bowl; mix until it's emulsified. Then add the anchovies and parsley. Season.

**5** When the vegetables are ready, take them out of the oven and let them sit for 5min. Arrange the baby spinach on the plate, scatter over the aubergine and broccoli and drizzle over your dressing. This dish works well on its own as a healthy supper or on the side with something like roast lamb.

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

### COOK'S NOTE

\* Broccoli takes on a lovely nutty flavour when you roast it in a bit of olive oil in a hot oven. It's more interesting and satisfying than just blanching it, and it retains its crunch a little better, which works really well against the softness of the roasted aubergine.



## Pan-roasted pollock with lettuce, bacon and clams

**SERVES 2**

2 thick pollock or hake fillets or other white fish (ask the fishmonger to remove skin)  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper  
Large handful of clams or cockles, in shells, cleaned  
Light olive oil  
Unsalted butter  
2 shallots, finely sliced  
1 garlic clove, crushed  
1 bay leaf

2 rashers of smoked back bacon, cut into lardons  
100ml white wine  
300ml fish stock  
2tbsp double cream  
1tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice  
1 sprig thyme, leaves picked  
8 leaves of baby gem or romaine lettuce, washed and sliced  
1tbsp finely chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves

**1** Season fillets with a little sea salt 2 hours before cooking to draw out excess water. Keep the

### COOK'S NOTE

\* Pollock is used here because it's cheaper and more plentiful than cod and just as tasty, but you could use cod, coley, hake or haddock.

clams or cockles in a bowl in the fridge with a damp tea towel over them. Before cooking, place them in a bowl of water under a gently running cold tap for about 10min to encourage them to give up their grit.

**2** Heat a dessertspoon of oil and a knob of butter in a pan. Add shallots, garlic and bay leaf, and cook for 2min over a medium heat, until they start to soften.

**3** Add the lardons and cook for a further 5min, stirring to coat the shallots in the bacon fat. Add the white wine and reduce until it's mostly evaporated, then add the fish stock and reduce again by almost half (another 8-10min).

**4** Add the cream, bring back to the boil and simmer for another 2min. Take off the heat, remove the bay leaf and season with lemon juice. Taste the sauce and add more salt, lemon or cream to your taste.

**5** Heat a little oil in a heavy-based frying pan until really hot, and add the seasoned fish fillets. Cook for 4min, until they form a golden brown crust and come away from the pan easily, then flip them over.

**6** Add a knob of butter and the thyme, and cook for another 3-4min. When they're cooked through, and firm to the touch, transfer to a warm plate and leave to rest under foil while you cook the clams or cockles.

**7** Heat a little more oil in the fish pan and add the drained clams or cockles and the lettuce. Put a clear lid over the pan and shake it around a bit, until the clams start to open (about 3min).

**8** Transfer the contents of the pan to the shallots, bacon and stock and heat up until just boiling, simmering for 1min, then stir in the parsley and taste for seasoning. Discard any clams that are still closed.

**9** Plate-up the fish fillets then divide the clam and lettuce sauce between the two plates or bowls. It pays to set the table with a spoon when you make this dish, because the sauce is so delicious you'll want to eat every last drop. It's nice served with buttery potato purée or, better still, chips!



## Smoked trout with griddled lemon, cucumber and sourdough croutons

**SERVES 2**

1tbsp caster sugar  
1tbsp cider vinegar  
(unpasteurised if possible)  
2 radishes, finely sliced  
Sea salt  
2 baby or Lebanese cucumbers, cut in half lengthwise and halved across the middle  
1 lemon, cut in half  
1 slice of sourdough bread  
6tbsp olive oil, plus extra for grilling  
2tbsp roughly chopped dill  
2 smoked trout fillets, skin removed  
Borage flowers, to garnish (optional)  
4tsp plain natural yogurt, to serve

**1** In a small bowl, dissolve the sugar in the cider vinegar and quick-pickle the radish slices by dropping in the mixture.  
**2** Heat a griddle pan over a high heat until it's really hot. Scatter with a pinch of sea salt. Brush the cucumber pieces, cut sides of the lemon and sourdough bread with olive oil and griddle for about 8min until there are black grill marks on

them, turning the bread and cucumber over once.

**3** When the ingredients are grilled, remove from the heat and squeeze the lemon juice into a bowl with the oil. Whisk with a fork, add the dill and a pinch of salt and whisk some more until well combined. Cut the sourdough into croutons.  
**4** Drain the radishes of their pickle liquor by placing on

kitchen paper to absorb the excess vinegar. Divide the cucumber between two plates and flake over the smoked trout. Top with the radish slices, and drizzle over the dill and lemon oil.

**5** Scatter over the sourdough croutons and borage flowers, if using, and finish each serving with 2tsp natural yogurt.

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

**COOK'S NOTE**

\* This would also work with any good quality smoked fish such as mackerel or hot-smoked salmon.



**COOK'S NOTE**

\* This traditional Tuscan tomato and bread salad is an ingenious way of using up stale bits of sourdough or crusty bread which, when soaked in the sweet tomato juices, become absolutely delicious. Heirloom tomato varieties work well because of their interesting shapes and colours.

## Panzanella

**SERVES 4**

**Handful of fresh basil (about 12g)**  
**4tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling**  
**1tbsp salted capers, rinsed**  
**300g stale sourdough bread, torn into chunks**  
**500g ripe heirloom tomatoes in a variety of colours, shapes and sizes, washed and sliced, reserving the seeds and juice**  
**10g Kalamata or other dark olives, pitted and sliced**  
**½ red onion, finely sliced**  
**Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper**  
**1tbsp red wine vinegar**

**1** Blitz most of the basil leaves (leaving a few whole to use for the garnish) in a food processor with the olive oil and capers, or you could finely chop the basil and capers together by hand and stir into the olive oil if you prefer. Transfer to a bowl and add the chunks of sourdough. Toss them in the herby caper oil. **2** Place the sliced tomatoes, squeezing some of them to release their juice, in a large salad bowl along with the reserved seeds and juice, and mix together with most of the olives and red onion, and

some more olive oil. Season with the salt and pepper and add the red wine vinegar, stirring to coat. Add half of the herby caper oil and all of the sourdough bread chunks, and mix to make sure the bread is coated in all the juices. **3** To serve, transfer the salad to a serving platter, layering the tomato slices, olives, onion and sourdough. Drizzle over the remaining herb oil and garnish with fresh basil leaves and the remaining red onion and olives. Season again with the salt and pepper and devour immediately. **HB**



Recipes are taken from *A Lot On Her Plate* by Rosie Birkett (£25, Hardie Grant) with photography by Helen Cathcart

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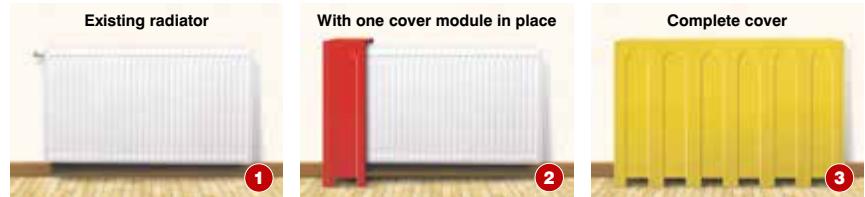
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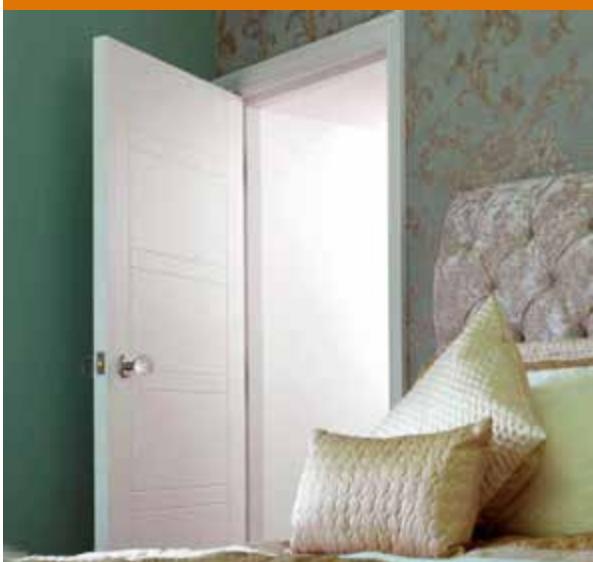
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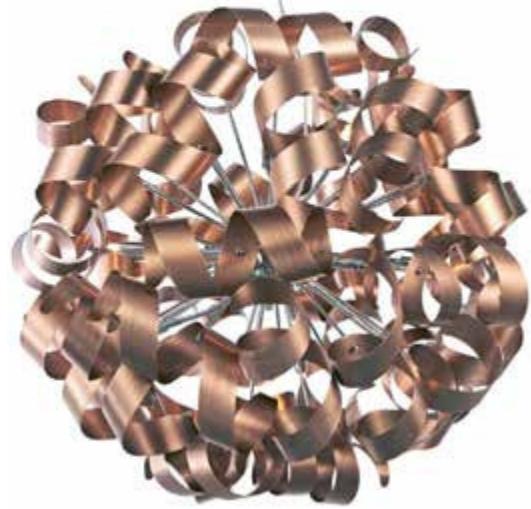
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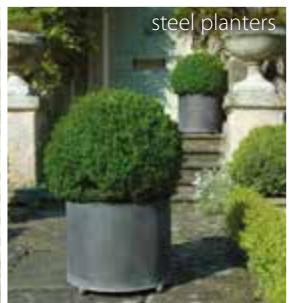
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## ROB RYAN

Best known for his whimsical papercuts, artist and author Rob, and wife Lorna, who are both 52, live in the same London council flat they moved into as young parents. They have two daughters, Maria and Barbara



Above: Rob's studio. Left: Only Time glasses, £16.99 for two, Fred Aldous



## WHERE I LIVE

**On a warm August morning in 1991**, my wife Lorna and I stood in the local City of Westminster housing office and were handed the keys to our new home. I'll never forget walking down the road, pushing our two-year-old daughter Maria in her pram and wondering what on earth lay in store for us. **Penniless at 29 and desperate** for a home of our own, after months of emergency housing, we knew we had to take whatever we were offered by the council. Fortunately we'd admired this block from a distance, and when we reached our seventh floor flat, the first thing we noticed was the breathtaking view – on one side Battersea Power Station, and Harrods on the other.

**In a brown brick block in Pimlico**, the flat, built in 1900 for single gentlemen, still has funny little service lifts and dumb waiters. There's a park where our daughters learned to ride their bikes. They grew up with the whole of London as their backyard.

**A hallway, living room, little galley kitchen**, bathroom and two bedrooms make up the property. The bathroom has the original bath and 1920s tiles, and an old loo with a cistern that looks like it will fall on your head. Although the council have offered many times to replace it with a modern suite, we've always said no because it's so unique. **Original cork tiled flooring** in the living room changes in the shifting daylight with a warm variation of tone. The small galley kitchen has simple white Ikea units with a basic wooden surface. To personalise it, I had some tiles I designed myself with little slogans or mottos put up as a splashback.

**People often say that living in a high rise** flat has no sense of community, but meeting our neighbours in the lift made us smile, talk and get to know each other. I even help some of their children with homework.

## MY INSPIRATION

**Living in the sky is great.** As an artist, it's just you, the clouds and daydreams. Every day I go to a studio to work, but in that quiet hour before bedtime I watch the lights across London. Often that's when I get my ideas. **Our walls are adorned with images** by me or friends from art school. Pictures

Left: Rob looks out over Battersea Power Station from his home (below). Right: One of his designs



are personal links to your own history and I hang them almost like family photos.

**One of my favourite paintings** dominates a wall. It's a lovely image of a grandfather figure holding a young girl, but when you look closer, her fingers are like aliens. Visitors are magically drawn to it.

**If you hang a picture**, a place instantly becomes your home. Books decorate a room, so I have shelves crammed with them.

## FAMILY LIFE

**My dad was in the RAF** and by the time I was 10 we'd moved nearly every year. It made me want to stay in the same place for the sake of my kids, and we've never moved even when our flat became cramped.

**When the girls were little**, they had a bunk bed in the small bedroom, that we painted pink. When Barbara began to walk, we fixed a little handle on the door so she could open it. It's only a foot and a half off the floor, and it's still there. We couldn't bear to take it down. It's 'Barbara's handle', a lovely reminder of when our girls were small.

**There's no room to eat in the kitchen**, but we made a point of sitting down every evening to talk and eat together at the ridiculously large table in the living room. It seats up to 12. I bought it on eBay for £40!

**Now Barbara's finished college** and has moved back home, she sits at the dinner table with us once more. She's such good company, it makes me realise how much we missed the girls when they left.

**Once Barbara finds a job** she'll move out, and then it'll just be Lorna and me again in our cosy home. We'll be surrounded by so many happy memories, pictures and sky. **HB**

● See Rob's work at [robryanstudio.com](http://robryanstudio.com)



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